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CIS

FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 31, 1988

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FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVES

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 1988

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
AND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room B-318, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Thomas J. Downey (acting chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

[The press release announcing the hearing follows:]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1988

PR #11
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
AND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
1102 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1721

THE HONORABLE THOMAS J. DOWNEY (D., N.Y.), ACTING CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION, COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ANNOUNCES A HEARING ON EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVES

The Honorable Thomas J. Downey, Acting Chairman, Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives today announced that the Subcommittee will conduct a hearing on extension of authority for the foster care independent living initiatives. The hearing will be held on Thursday, March 31, 1988, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in room B-318 Rayburn House Office Building.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Downey said, "Two years ago, we authorized funds for State efforts to help teenage children in foster care make the transition to independence. This hearing will tell us more about how States have used these funds; what they have accomplished; and what their future needs are."

BACKGROUND:

On September 30, 1988, authority for State independent living programs will expire. These initiatives are designed to help children in foster care who are age 16 or older make the transition from foster care to independent living. The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-272) authorized funds for this purpose for fiscal years 1987 and 1988. The authorization level for this entitlement is $45 million.

Individuals and organizations interested in presenting oral testimony before the Subcommittee are asked to discuss the purposes for which States have used the independent living funds; the reasons for delays in implementing these projects; and whether continued funding for independent living initiatives is appropriate.

In the near future, the Subcommittee plans joint hearings with the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families on other needed improvements in child welfare, foster care and adoption programs. Details of these hearings will be announced in a subsequent press release.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF REQUESTS TO BE HEARD:

Individuals and organizations interested in presenting oral testimony before the Subcommittee must submit their requests to be heard by telephone to Harriett Lawler [(202) 225-1721] no later than close of business, Wednesday March 23, 1988. The telephone request must be followed by a formal written request to Robert J. Leonard, Chief Counsel, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. The Subcommittee staff will notify by telephone those scheduled to appear as soon as possible after the filing deadline. Any questions concerning a scheduled appearance should be directed to the Subcommittee [(202) 225-1025].

It is urged that persons and organizations having a common position make every effort to designate one spokesperson to represent them in order for the Subcommittee to hear as many points of view as possible. Time for oral presentations will be strictly limited with the understanding that a more detailed statement may be included in the printed record of the hearing. This process will afford more time for members to question witnesses. In addition, witnesses may be grouped as panelists with strict time limitations for each panelist.

In order to assure the most productive use of the limited amount of time available to question witnesses, all witnesses scheduled to appear before the Subcommittee are required to submit 75 copies of their prepared statements to the Subcommittee office, B-317 Rayburn House Office Building, at least 24 hours in advance of their scheduled appearance. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the witness being denied the opportunity to testify in person.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS IN LIEU OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Persons wishing to submit a written statement for the printed record of the hearing should submit at least six (6) copies of their statements by the close of business, Thursday, April 14, 1988, to Robert J. Leonard, Chief Counsel, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. If those filing written statements for the record of the printed hearing wish to have their statements distributed to the press and interested public, they may deliver 75 additional copies for this purpose to room B-317 Rayburn House Office Building on the date of the hearing.

SEE FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS BELOW:

Each statement presented for printing to the Committee by a witness, any written statement or exhibit submitted for the printed record or any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any statement or exhibit not in compliance with these guidelines will **not** be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All statements and any accompanying exhibits for printing must be typed in single space on legal-size paper and may not exceed a total of 10 pages.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. Statements must contain the name and capacity in which the witness will appear or, for written comments, the name and capacity of the person submitting the statement, as well as any clients or persons, or any organization for whom the witness appears or for whom the statement is submitted.
4. A supplemental sheet must accompany each statement listing the name, full address, a telephone number where the witness or the designated representative may be reached and a topical outline or summary of the comments and recommendations in the full statement. This supplemental sheet will not be included in the printed record.

The above restrictions and limitations apply only to material being submitted for printing. Statements and exhibits or supplementary material submitted solely for distribution to the Members, the press and public during the course of a public hearing, may be submitted in other forms.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. The Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation will come to order.

Two years ago Congress authorized a new program under title IV-E of the Social Security Act designed to help older foster care youth prepare for independent living. The authorization for this program expires on September the 30th of this year.

Children who have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care are a special responsibility of the Federal, State, and local governments. Approximately 50,000 foster care youth are 16 years of age or older. Nine percent of the children who leave foster care in a year do so because they have reached the age of majority.

Why did Congress establish this program? My own State illustrates the answer to this question. Studies of homeless youth in shelters in New York City have shown that 50 percent of these youths had a history of foster care placement. Another study found that within 18 months of leaving foster care, one-third of former foster care girls were receiving AFDC.

We called this hearing to learn from the Administration and public and private child welfare agencies about their current planned use of the foster care independent living funds. Legislation has been introduced to extend the authorization for the program and to make other changes.

In addition to today's hearing, the subcommittee plans joint hearings beginning on April 13 with the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, to take a comprehensive and long range look at child welfare and foster care needs and programs in this country.

Our first witness this morning is a member of this subcommittee, Bob Matsui,

Bob, it is a pleasure to have you.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. MATSUI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today to address the issue of foster care transitional independent living programs.

As you know, I have been interested in improving the foster care programs in our Nation for some time. This interest culminated in the introduction of the Child Welfare and Foster Care Amendments of 1987, H.R. 2753, cosponsored by my colleagues Mr. Stark, Mr. Ford, Mrs. Kennelly, and Mr. Miller. H.R. 2753 amends part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to make necessary improvements in the foster care and adoption assistance program with the objective of assuring that this program will more realistically and more effectively meet the needs of the youth it is designed to serve.

Every year over 460,000 youths spend some time in foster care in this country. In any 1 month, approximately 276,000 youth are in a foster care setting. It is crucial that these foster care children and teens ultimately become productive citizens. They are our stake in the future. Although there are no easy solutions or quick fixes for the long neglected needs of foster care youth, there are changes which are within our immediate reach. It is simple common sense

to seek to invest in programs for young people which help them grow up physically and emotionally healthy, well educated, and self confident in their ability ') create a better world.

Specifically, title I of H.R. 2753 will extend and improve the transitional independent living program which is due to expire at the end of this year.

Under the current program the Federal subsidy for title IV-E youth ends at the age of 18, or, at the State option, up to age 19 if the youth is finishing high school. H.R. 2753 will allow States the option of extending the Federal foster care subsidy for title IV-E youth up to the age of 21. In order for the State to take advantage of this option, the youth must participate in an independent living program, and the State must have a written transitional independent living plan for the youth.

Child psychologists and other experts on child and adolescent development consider the years 16 to 20 to be critical years. This age group is extremely susceptible to peer pressure and the message of the immediate society they encounter. Foster youth in this age group, many of whom have grown up in a foster care system, suddenly find themselves on their own when Federal foster care subsidies end, unless the State of course chooses the option of maintaining the youth in a program funded totally by State funds, which is very expensive. These youths will not be adopted, and they will not return to their biological families. These youths are forced to be immediately economically self-sufficient and provide for their own basic needs. It is really ridiculous to think that an 18 or 19 year old will be able to find a legitimate job that pays enough to cover rent, grocery bills, clothing and health care—all the basic necessities of life. Certainly, these youths will not be able to save money for college or vocational education to better themselves.

The abrupt termination of youth from foster care at age 18 or 19 serves neither the goals of foster care for the youth nor the community into which these young people are tossed. This abrupt termination better serves the goals of the drug dealers and other criminals who can recruit these vulnerable youths who are desperately looking for a way to support themselves.

H.R. 2753 also allows States the option of including all foster care youth, not just title IV-E eligible youth, in their independent living program.

It is not economically efficient and practical for the States to try to separate title IV-E eligible and ineligible youth.

Another issue I'm very interested in is the possibility of extending independent living program eligibility to youth after they move out of the foster care institution or home. I'd like to examine the possibility of a 6-month extension so that the youths can continue to receive counseling when they may need it most—during the first few months they are living on their own.

To consider this type of extension involves examining the definition of what we really traditionally have considered to be foster care. The realities and the complexities of life in the 1980's and 1990's may require that we change our thinking about the necessary scope of the foster care program which truly prepares foster youth for successful lives.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and of course your staff for your assistance on this effort. Last year we were able to get two provisions of H.R. 2753 into law, and I'm hopeful we are going to be able to get the remaining provisions as well.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Congressman Matsui, we appreciate your appearance here, both as a member of this subcommittee, and also, your longstanding interest in this matter.

When we talk about the whole universe of children, older children in foster care are not a large number. But we are talking about a group of people that directly need our help and the champions of their cause, people like yourself, are to be congratulated for paying attention to a group that really needs attention paid to them.

Thanks, Bob.

Mr. MATSUI. Thank you.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. The committee will next hear from Dodie Borup, the Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Human Development Services of the Department of Health and Human Services.

STATEMENT OF DODIE TRUMAN BORUP, COMMISSIONER, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES, OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, ACCOMPANIED BY JOSEPH MOTTOLA, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER; AND BETTY STEWART, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Ms. BORUP. Good morning, Mr. Downey, we are very happy to be here to discuss the Independent Living Initiatives Program.

I would like to introduce my Deputy, Joe Mottola on my left, and our Associate Commissioner for the Children's Bureau, Betty Stewart, on my right.

The Independent Living Initiatives Program was enacted as part of the Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, familiarly known as Public Law 99-272.

This law authorizes Federal funds under title IV-E of the Social Security Act to stimulate State participation in providing specialized services to help title IV-E eligible foster children, age 16 and older, with a transition to independent living.

These services include helping foster children earn a high school diploma or receive vocational training, and prepare them for daily living with training and budgeting, locating housing, career planning and finding jobs.

No non-Federal match was required of the States. By the end of 1988, States will have been awarded $90 million in Federal grants for independent living, and will be able to use unused portions of the $45 million from the 1988 awards until the end of fiscal year 1989.

The authorization for the Independent Living Initiatives Program expires at the end of fiscal year 1988. The administration does not support renewing that legislation.

The administration believes that the Independent Living Initiatives Program has stimulated State efforts in this area. All 50 States and the District of Columbia have participated. And they

are expected to continue improving their independent living efforts.

The 2-year authorization for independent living initiatives established a short-term program to help States develop their own programs. Other Federal programs, which States may use to continue development and implementation of independent living programs include the social services block grant and child welfare services programs, for which approximately $2.9 billion has been requested in fiscal year 1989.

State and local governments, and community agencies, should also continue to support independent living programs in communities throughout the country.

The benefits of the Federal contribution will continue for years to come. We believe that by the end of fiscal year 1988 States will have established a foundation from which they can continue to build these community-based programs.

On February 10, 1987, we sent out a program instruction which provided information and specified application procedures regarding fiscal year 1987 funding and also included approaches the States could utilize in planning for independent living services.

Since many States prefer to take a comprehensive and coordinated approach to planning their service programs and would want to look at the continuum of needs of older foster children to determine the specific kinds of independent living services to be provided, a needs assessment was recommended as the first step in such a process.

We also suggested that the title IV-E Independent Living Initiatives Program funds should be viewed as one funding source to be used in combination with other funds to support a comprehensive range of services.

Since such a program of comprehensive services depends on the extent and quality of coordinated efforts among various State and local agencies, our program instruction emphasized the expectation of new and improved relationships and working agreements with other service programs and organizations.

The development and improvement of community program resources and public-private partnerships are expected to result in more effective and dynamic independent living programs for all children leaving foster care.

In fiscal year 1987 ACYF awarded grants totalling $45 million to all of the States and the District of Columbia. In their applications, the States indicated that these funds would be used to assist about 20,000 children in foster care.

Under the current statute, program reports from the States covering fiscal year 1987 programs and activities were due to be submitted by March 1 of this year. To date, 32 of the States have submitted reports, and thus, comprehensive national data on the number of children served and types of services provided are not available at this time.

Since some States have not reported on their programs, we cannot comment on the success of the independent living initiatives at this time. However, we will review the data in the States' reports once they have all been received to evaluate the effective-

ness of Federal funds in stimulating development of State and local programs.

As one might expect, the States furthest along, such as Arizona and Minnesota, were recipients of ACYF discretionary grants to develop model projects related to independent living, prior to enactment of Public Law 99-272.

In providing technical assistance to the other States, ACYF has used Arizona and Minnesota as models.

Information and data on fiscal year 1987 activities not available at this time will be included in the States' fiscal year 1988 program reports. As legislatively mandated, HHS will submit a report to Congress later this year regarding the States' use of the independent living initiatives funds.

On October 30, 1987, ACYF issued a program instruction to the States requesting applications for fiscal year 1988 funding for the independent living initiatives. Applications were due by December 31, 1987.

Forty-five States and the District of Columbia submitted their applications before the deadline, and of these, 38 applications have been approved.

The eight unapproved applications lacked some of the information required to meet the criteria required set forth in the legislation. We are now working with these eight States. As soon as appropriate responses are received, grants for fiscal year 1988 will be awarded.

The administration's commitment to independent living programs precedes the authorization of the Independent Living Initiatives Program under title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Prior to enactment of this new program, we had already taken steps to assist children in foster care to make the transition to independent living.

In fiscal year 1986, for example, the Children's Bureau funded seven demonstration grants to develop program models to work with foster care youth regarding employment, housing, and other aspects of self-sufficiency.

In addition, three universities were funded to develop and test training materials for foster parents and youth workers.

Also, in accordance with an interagency agreement between ACTION and ACYF, three projects focusing on the use of volunteers to assist foster care youth were funded by ACTION.

These ACTION/Children Bureau projects were developed concurrently with a set of six projects funded by the ACYF Family and Youth Services Bureau. They were directed toward older, homeless youth.

In January 1987, the three agencies held a joint grantees meeting in order to share resources and enable the programs to establish networks.

In late March of 1988, when most of these special projects were completed, or were in their final phases, a national dissemination conference was held in Washington. Training curricula, student handbooks, a considerable variety of video training tapes and other resources, were made available at this conference.

In addition, presentations by the model projects, selected State program coordinators, and other persons provided State coordina-

tors with a range of models to assist them in the development of their own programs.

For instance, Minnesota under a 1986 ACYF discretionary demonstration grant, developed model independent living programs in three rural counties. This demonstration effort was closely monitored in the State office, and when the Public Law 99–272 money became available, it was used as a basis for statewide planning. That's a nice success story.

The demonstration grant to Arizona for their young adult program is also particularly noteworthy because of their ability to involve private corporations to assist in job training, employment readiness and job development for young people in foster care.

At the end of this grant the program was expanded statewide in that state.

That concludes my prepared testimony. We would be very happy to answer any questions you might have now.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Thank you, Commissioner.

I think as you state in your testimony, the administration has been interested in children transitioning out of foster care for some time.

Ms. BORUP. That is true.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Why is that?

Ms. BORUP. Because we recognize the problem.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. There is a serious problem out there.

Ms. BORUP. No question. Sure.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Do you consider it a national problem?

Ms. BORUP. Yes.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Is it conceivable that some of the States will do a better job than others in providing a program, and that some States may not do anything?

Ms. BORUP. Well, I guess I would hate to think that some States will do nothing. But I think we find in all of our programs that there is unevenness from State to State.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. All right, some do it well and some don't do it well.

Ms. BORUP. Right, and some have a different degree of expertise or talent or dollar resources or other kinds of resources.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Well, given that reality, why would we not want to reauthorize this program?

Ms. BORUP. Well, as you know, we have the budget deficit problem. And I know you are well aware of that.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. But I don't really care about the budget deficit when we see kids in shelters or becoming homeless. I mean, we all worry about the budget deficit, but this is not a big program. It does not appear as though it is going to bust the budget.

Go ahead.

Ms. BORUP. Our feeling—to speak in broad terms—is that we have some projects underway. And models are growing out of these. There is money available through the Social Services Block Grant Program and the Child Welfare Services.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Let's look at that for a second. The Federal funds for title XX social service program, plus the child

title IV-B, child welfare service funds, in 1976, for instance, we provided $2.63 billion.

And just as an example, the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect reported to child welfare agencies was about 670,000 that year; and we spent $2.6 billion.

In 1989 the estimate is that we will have 2 million plus reports, actually it was 1.9 million in 1985. And in title XX and title IV programs we will spend $2.9 billion.

So we have a choice, it seems to me. We can provide less staff to investigate and provide services to abused kids, or we could provide less services to older foster kids; I mean, that is the choice, right?

Ms. BORUP. I hear you, yes. That is the dilemma we have, too.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. From a reasonable perspective, that does not seem to be a thing a government does. It does not seem smart. Does that seem smart to you?

Ms. BORUP. Well, I think while dollars are important, very important, in the work for children that we are doing across the country—not just we; but the country—it isn't the only answer.

And I do not think we can always equate increasing dollars with increasing effectiveness.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. No, I agree, and I think that is true. I think a lot has to do with how programs are administered, and the people you have to administer them. There is no question about that.

But at some point if there is no money, no matter how strong the will or how interested the people are, they have to provide for their families.

At some point there is an irreducible minimum here that we reach.

Ms. BORUP. I agree.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. What I find—somehow inside your testimony there is a sense I have that you feel that this is an important program; this is an important need. Yet the fact that you don't want to reauthorize, is not justified in the testimony.

It also does not matter, because we are not going to pay any attention to what the administration wants anyway.

Ms. BORUP. We know that.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Because it does not make any sense. But when it comes to children, I want you to know—and I appreciate your testimony here, and my sense is that probably in your heart of hearts you would like this money. But I do not want to put you on the spot.

Ms. BORUP. Thank you.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. We are going to reauthorize this program, and we are going to put more money into it, because it is the only sensible thing to do.

This is a national problem. It is not going to go away by wishing that some States will do a good job and some States will not do a good job. Because we know that.

Some States cannot afford to do a good job; they just do not have the resources to do it.

Ms. BORUP. If you do reauthorize it—and I am not surprised with what you just said—I just hope that we can really take a close look at how it is working.

Because one of the problems I mentioned in the testimony is that we are not really able at this point—and it really was not a copout—to give you comprehensive——

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. You said you only have 32 reports.

Ms. BORUP. Yes, we only have 32 reports so far. And they are not all very comprehensive.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Let us talk about that for a minute. What type of evaluations are being conducted by your agency to determine which of these programs are effective?

Do we have any criteria?

Ms. BORUP. Let me defer to Mr. Mottola.

Mr. MOTTOLA. Mr. Chairman, we recognized the need to evaluate this program fairly early on, and we put in place a contract in October of 1987 so that the contractor could get in on the ground floor and work with the States to see how progress was coming.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Who is the contractor?

Mr. MOTTOLA. The contractor, Westat, has significant amount of experience in social service evaluation.

The sense right now is, based on a preliminary report, is that the States are really not far along in using these funds, which is very understandable.

This was a fair amount of money that was put into the system without a lot of lead time, which is normal when Congress passes a program. It takes time for the system to absorb it.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Let me just stop you here a minute. That also could argue both ways for continuing and stopping the program. The fact is, if you don't know how it is working, you could say, well, let us stop it before we find out it works or does not work.

But it would lead one to conclude that if it is in such an early stage, and possibly some are working, it might indicate that you may want to continue it.

I am just saying, that the conclusion that the administration comes to, just does not seem to make any sense.

Mr. MOTTOLA. While not having definitive information on which to base a recommendation, we are concerned about the categorical nature of the program, which limits it to IV-E eligible children.

To get back to the evaluation picture, we have some anecdotal information that the contractor has gathered—well, it is more than anecdotal; it is systematic. But it is based on sporadic replies from the States.

Because as we have said, some States are further along than others.

So I guess the best conclusion we can draw at this point in time is that the States are trying very hard to use the money in ways in which the legislation intended it to be used, but we do not have in all of the States, certainly, definitive results.

Some States are still in a hiring process. Some States are still in the process of moving the money out to the local agencies which will spend it.

But quite honestly we think this is one of the better evaluations. Because we were able to get in at the ground floor, when a program was beginning. And we were able to develop some baseline information and see where States were prior to the legislation.

Thus, we will be in a good position to review progress, using the money that was provided in the legislation.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. So you feel confident that your contractor will provide you with the criteria that you feel will be necessary to determine what works and what doesn't?

Mr. MOTTOLA. Yes, we've been working with the contractor closely to do that. And we have also, as the Commissioner indicated, been working with the grantees to get a sense of where they are.

We just concluded a national conference on independent living to get a sense of where States are and how we could move further along. And the contractor is involved.

Ms. BORUP. Our Department with the Department of Labor has been working on an initiative called Youth 2000. In the year 2000 we anticipate that the number of jobs available will be higher than the number young workers.

So it is critical not only for the kids but for our economy that our young people be prepared to take jobs. And although we quibble with the Congress about dollars, I think there is a very strong commitment on the part of the Department to the importance of independent living as part of the broader theme of helping kids.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. That does seem a little strange, when you do not want to continue the program.

Ms. BORUP. Well, you know the position we are in.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. I understand and I do not doubt that from you. But if one were to objectively evaluate your strong interest in this, and then weigh that against the fact that you do not want to reauthorize it.

Ms. BORUP. It is kind of like my staff. My agency is in tight shape staffwise, and you just try to prioritize and do the best you can.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. This is the administration that wants to put missiles on railroad cars.

Ms. BORUP. Fortunately, I do not have to speak for the Department of Defense.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. I know. I am not asking you to. I appreciate your testimony.

Ms. BORUP. Thank you very much.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. You are quite welcome.

Ms. BORUP. If we can be helpful.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Yes. I am very interested in how the program develops. We will be anxious to receive your report, and we will examine it.

And we may have you back up here when you have got some more information from the States to see how it is going.

Ms. BORUP. We would really appreciate you sending us what you are hearing from the States, because we can feed it into our picture too.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Sure, absolutely. Thank you.

Ms. BORUP. Thank you.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Okay, the committee will next hear from a panel consisting of the following: the Child Welfare League of America, Dennis Walcott, executive director, Harlem-Dowling Children's Service from New York City; New York Department of Social Services, Barbara Sabol; California Department of Social

Services, Albert Colon; Minnesota Department of Social Services, Joan Hiller; and the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Julie Lessard.

Mr. Walcott, if you would begin. And without objection, all your testimony will be entered in the record in full. If you want to summarize it or read it, you can do whatever you wish.

Mr. Walcott, if you would proceed first.

STATEMENT OF DENNIS WALCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HARLEM-DOWLING CHILDREN'S SERVICE, NEW YORK CITY, ON BEHALF OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

Mr. WALCOTT. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the panel.

On behalf of the Child Welfare League of America, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning to testify in support of extending the authority for the foster care independent living initiative.

My name is Dennis Walcott, and I am the executive director of Harlem-Dowling Children's Service. Harlem-Dowling is a member of the Child Welfare League of America, and we provide a wide range of services to children and families in New York City and throughout the country.

Our programs include preventive services to children and families in New York City, central Harlem; adoption services to residents of New York City and throughout the country, as well as to residents of the Caribbean Islands; foster care services, which include a board-a-baby program that has placed over 150 children out of hospitals into loving foster homes; sexual abuse program; a 24-hour-emergency foster boarding home program; tutorial services; and our independent living program.

Through our firsthand experience, we are very aware of the value of need for independent living program, and strongly urge continued support from the Federal Government.

In addition to supporting the reauthorization of foster care independent living initiative, the Child Welfare League of America also strongly supports and urges the subcommittee's favorable consideration of sections 101 and 102 of H.R. 2753, produced by Representative Bob Matsui, which seeks to extend as a State option the Federal foster care subsidy up to age 21, and include in the independent living initiative non-AFDC foster care children respectively.

With respect to the reauthorization of the independent living initiative, testimonies giving rise to the initial authorization of this program indicated that many foster care youth were increasingly becoming a large part of the homeless population.

One study conducted in 1984 by Shaffer and Caton, for example, found that 50 percent of the young people who came to the shelters in New York City had previously lived in foster care.

Moreover, compared with who have not previously been in foster care, those who had exhibited more deviant behaviors, such as more arrests, arrests for more serious crime, evidence of greater instability, such as more frequent running away.

Another New York study found that one-third of the youth leaving foster care ended up on aid to families with dependent chil-

dren, or State general assistance, within 18 months or less of leaving care.

In preparation for this testimony we contacted our member agencies, both public and private, in the States of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas, to learn whether the existence of this program has made a tangible difference in the lives of foster youths relative to those statements made during the original hearings.

In the majority of States, the problems are just now getting underway in terms of contracting with providers to deliver the services; hiring and training of staff and program managers; and training of providers such as foster parents.

In short, the services have not yet reached the foster care youth, and therefore, the answer as to whether this program has made a difference in the lives of such youth is difficult if not impossible to answer in any comprehensive fashion.

The reason most often stated as to why the programs are not yet fully operational is due in large measure to the delays on the part of the administration to initially advise the States of the program's existence, and then in releasing the funds.

The program was enacted into law in April of 1986; funds were appropriated in October of 1986, $45 million. And yet the Department of Health and Human Services did not officially notify States to submit plans until April of 1987, and it was not until June or July of 1987 that the funds were actually appropriated to the States.

In our written statement, we listed some of the many services which the States anticipate providing to foster youth under this program, and the witnesses who will follow me will go into more depth outlining their programs.

Let me just say that all the States and providers we spoke we are encouraged by the prospects available through this program in helping prepare foster youth for independence.

However, since this program was initiated in fiscal year 1987 funding, States are faced with having to spend all their initial program funds by September 30, 1988, or be forced to return any unspent funds to the U.S. Treasury.

All States that we spoke with expressed concern that, just as they are getting underway, that is, just as the services begin to reach the youth, the program will be jeopardized with having to return funds budgeted and assumed available throughout the entire course of the program.

The needs giving rise to the initial authorization of this program exist now more than ever before, and therefore, the Child Welfare League strongly supports and urges that the foster care independent living program be reauthorized through fiscal year 1990 in order that the program be allowed to become fully operational, and that the participating youth be allowed to fully benefit from services that are continuous and stable.

Further, the Child Welfare League suggests that a waiver be granted to allow States to extend the use of fiscal year 1987 funds through December 31, 1988.

With respect to extending the State option for Federal foster care subsidy up to age 21, among the States that we contacted, some

constitute through State subsidies to provide for foster care youth up to age 21.

Others—Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Minnesota—end the subsidy either at age 18 or 19.

One program manager in a State where the subsidy ends at 19 admitted to feeling as though their independent living efforts are wasted because it is ludicrous to think that by age 19 that these children are going to make it.

But they have to pretend that they are going to make it, and wave goodbye to them as they leave the foster care system. When asked what she meant, she said that the reference was too general to public assistance, AFDC, or possibly prison.

Logic dictates here, who among us would have been able to go out into the world, literally on our own, at age 18 or 19, get a job, an apartment, and survive in life.

Extending the State option up to 21 at least would provide States with the incentive to offer additional years of care, important years where youth would have more time to prepare emotionally, financially and be more mature compared to the existing situation where youth are discharged at 18 or 19.

While Child Welfare League of America believes that the link between AFDC and title IV–E foster care program is in general artificial, and at some point this subcommittee should give consideration to delinking the two programs, with respect to the age at which the foster care subsidy ends, the links should be disregarded.

There is no comparison between AFDC children and foster care with respect to this issue. AFDC children have a household in which to live. Foster care youth have nothing, and this is an opportunity to extend to them two additional years of State care and maintenance.

Therefore, the Child Welfare League strongly urges favorable consideration of section 101 of H.R. 2753 which provides States the option of continuing the Federal foster care subsidy up to age 21.

With respect to including the independent living initiative for non-AFDC or title IV–E children, many States we spoke to indicated that the current prohibition against including in the non-IV–E youth has caused severe handicaps in administering the program, and in some instances, contributed to the delays in implementing the program.

Some States choose not to include these children in the program, while others have included them under existing allocations, and other States have gone to their State legislatures to request State funds.

Clearly the need of non-IV–E children to be independent upon discharge from foster care are as great as the IV–E eligible children.

Even though all States that we spoke indicated that the additional funds would most likely be needed to adequately address their entire caseload, all States, for the time being, prefer and strongly support just having the flexibility to provide services for all foster care youth within the current allocation.

Therefore, the Child Welfare League of America urges favorable consideration of section 101 of H.R. 2753, which would allow States

the flexibility of providing independent living services to all foster care youth, regardless of their title IV–E eligibility.

The Child Welfare League appreciates the work of this subcommittee in behalf of the many children in the foster care system, and stands ready to assist you as you consider ways in which to improve their lives in foster care, and help make the system stronger and more responsive.

We strongly believe that sections 101, 102 of H.R. 2753 will strengthen the existing independent living initiative, and therefore, urge their adoption during the reauthorization of this program.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Walcott follows:]

STATEMENT OF DENNIS WALCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HARLEM-DOWLING CHILDREN'S SERVICES, NEW YORK, N.Y.

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Panel. On behalf of the Child Welfare League of America, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning to testify in support of extending the authority for the Foster Care Independent Living Initiative.

My name is Dennis Walcott and I am the Executive Director of the Harlem-Dowling Children's Services Agency located in New York City. My agency is a member of the Child Welfare League of America and we provide a range of services to children and families, including, for example, adoption, day treatment, foster care, protective services for neglected children and supportservices to families and children in their homes. Among the services we provide to foster care youth are independent living or transitional services to help prepare them to become self-sufficient upon leaving the foster care system.

The Child Welfare League of America is a national privately supported organization comprised of 500 child welfare agencies and 1000 affiliates located throughout North America whose efforts are directed toward the improvement of care and services for children and their families. For example, among our agencies are the New York State Council of Voluntary Family and Child Care Agencies; Colorado Christian Home; California Association of Services for Children; Massachusetts Office for Children; Children's Home of Cincinnati; Washington State Department of Social and Health Services; and the Connecticut Association of Private Nonprofit Child Caring Agencies.

In addition to supporting the reauthorization of the Foster Care Independent Living Initiative, the Child Welfare League of America also strongly supports and urges this Subcommittee's favorable consideration of Sections 101 and 102 of H.R. 2753, introduced by Rep. Matsui (D-CA) and co-sponsored by Representatives Barbara Kennelly (D-CT) and Harold Ford (D-TN), which seek to extend, as a state option, the federal foster care subsidy up to age 21 (provided the child is participating in an independent living program) and include in the Independent Living Initiative non-AFDC foster care children, respectively.

CWLA urges this Subcommittee, in considering the future needs of foster youth served under the Independent Living Initiative, that consideration also be given to ways in which the program might be strengthened or improved upon in order that foster youth are better prepared to live independently. In our opinion, Sections 101 and 102 of H.R. 2753 would strengthen the existing program and we therefore, urge that they be adopted by the Subcommittee during the reauthorization of this program.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVE:
Testimonies giving rise to the initial authorization of this program indicated that many foster youth were increasingly becoming a large part of the homeless population. One study conducted in 1984 by Shaffer and Caton, for example, found that 50% of the young people who came to the shelters they studied in New York City had previously lived in foster care settings. Moreover, compared with youths who had not previously been in

foster care, those who had exhibited more deviant behaviors (i.e., more arrests and arrests for more serious crimes) and evidenced greater instability (such as more frequent running away.) Another New York study found that one-third of the youth leaving foster care ended up on Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) or state general assistance within 18 months or less of leaving care (Pettiford, 1981.)

In preparation for this testimony, we contacted our member agencies, both public and private, in the states of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas, to learn whether the existence of this program had made a tangible difference in the lives of foster youth relative to statements made during the original hearings. In the majority of states, the programs are just now getting underway and, therefore, its difficult, if not impossible, to answer this question.

Most states are just now in the process of contracting with providers to deliver the services to foster youth or hiring regional and local program coordinators or conducting training of staff, providers and foster parents. In short, the services, by and large, have not yet reached the foster care youth.

The reason most often stated as to why this is the case relates to the continuous delays on the part of the Administration in initially advising the states of the program's existence and then in releasing the funds. The Program was enacted into law in April 1986; funds were appropriated ($45 million) in October 1986; and yet, the Department of Health and Human Services did not officially notify states to submit plans until April of 1987 and it was not until June or July of 1987 that funds were actually apportioned to the states. For most states -- not just the ones we've mentioned -- this is an entirely new program, requiring time in which to train staff and providers (including foster parents), hire program personnel, develop curricula and materials and incorporate it into the overall foster care case planning activities. With respect to services anticipated under the programs, there are similarities among the states with the one common feature or goal of promoting the youth's self-sufficiency. For example:

California will mandate education and training, including assistance with tutoring services, occupational and college preparatory high school classes. Optional services include assistance in looking for housing, managing a budget and health counseling.

Connecticut will provide education and employment assistance; support groups, daily living skills and supervised apartment living. Each Regional Office will have an Adolescent Specialist who will be responsible for case management and supervising the written Treatment Plan. The Plan will be structured in stages or steps and the Adolescent Specialist's role will be in helping the youth move from one step to the next. Emphasis will be on involving foster families, where appropriate, or identifying ongoing "visiting" resources for the youth after discharge.

Illinois also has individualized plans with a strong emphasis on completing high school, vocational and career planning. Youth retreats will also be part of the program for purposes of providing support for the youth as well as enabling program managers to evaluate whether the services provided are adequate.

Massachusetts will concentrate on individual needs assessment tied to skill building. Staff, providers and foster parents will be trained in independent living skills. Job skills and completion of high school will be emphasized as will community networking.

Minnesota will emphasize employment and educational training. A "mentor" program will also be developed where individual volunteers will be available to work with youth one-on-one while in care as well as once the youth has been discharged from care. Money management and life-skills training are also part of the program.

New York will focus on remedial education and vocational training; supervised independent living and "after care" for follow-up once the youth is discharged.

Ohio will also emphasize job and educational assessment and training. Courses on life skills, such as managing an apartment, a job and money, will also be taught.

Tennessee will develop a tutor-mentor program to provide the youth with one-on-one assistance as well as classes in preparing for employment or college. Foster parent training will also be provided.

Texas, in addition to education and employment training, will include counseling on personal development and building self-esteem. Staff, providers and foster parents will also be trained.

States and providers are encouarged by the prospects available under this program in helping to prepare foster youth for independence. However, since the program was initiated with FY 1987 funding, states are faced with having to spend all their initial program funds by September 30, 1988 or be forced to return any unspent funds to the U.S. Treasury. All states that we spoke to expressed concern that just as they are getting underway -- that is, just as services begin to reach the youth -- the program will be jeopardized with having to return funds budgeted and assumed available throughout the course of the program.

The needs giving rise to the initial authorization for this program still clearly exist. The actual services to help prepare youth to make the transition from foster care to "independence" have yet to be started up in a comprehensive manner and programs are now faced with the possibility of having to turn back funds just as the program is starting up.

The Child Welfare League of America, therefore, urges that the Foster Care Independent Living Initiative be reauthorized through FY 1990 in order that the program be allowed to become fully operational and that participating youth be allowed to fully benefit from services that are continuous and stable. Further, the Child Welfare League of America urges that a waiver be granted to states to extend the use of FY 1987 funds through December 31, 1988.

EXTENDING THE STATE OPTION FOR THE FEDERAL FOSTER CARE SUBSIDY UP TO AGE 21: In a recent annual essay written by the President of the Carnegie Foundation, the difficulty and confusion surrounding the developmental process from adolescence to adulthood is well described:

> "In premodern times, preparation for adulthood typically extended over much of childhood. Children had abundant opportunity for directly observing their parents and other adults performing the adult roles that they would eventually adopt when the changes of puberty endowed them with an adult body and capabilities. The skills necessary for adult life were gradually acquired and fullyavailable, or nearly so, by the end of puberty. In early adolescence now, there is probably more ambiguity and complexity about what constitutes preparation for effective adulthood than was ever the case before. A great many young people are not even clear about what their parents do for a living. Moreover, the version of adult life that they see on television and to a lesser extent in other media creates only a shadow image of adult experience, a mix of reality and fantasy."

The essay goes on for 12 pages discussing the erosion of family and social support networks; the easy access by adolescents to potentially life-threatening mechanisms, substances and activities; the disjunction between biological and social development; and confusion in young minds about adult roles and difficulty in foreseeing the years ahead. What is particularly striking about this is that the confusion, struggle and difficulty is set in the context of "normal" circumstances -- that is, where parents are ever present as consistent adult role models. Thus, the point is that the process of leaving adolescence and becoming an adult is difficult under the best of circumstances. But, for foster youth, who have lived most of their lives in uncertainty, the process can seem insurmountable.

As pointed up in a recent CWLA publication, Ready, Set, Go: An Agency Guide to Independent Living (Helen D. Stone):

> "For most adolescents, leaving home to be on one's own means voluntarily giving up the security of family and assuming responsibilities for one's behavior, goals and relationships. In the traditional family, youths leave when emotionally and economically ready to be independent.....For adolescents in foster care, however, the process of leaving home is described as 'exiting' foster care. It means leaving the official care or custody of a public or voluntary child care agency when the statutory age for release is reached. It means making their own way in the world - ready or not - and generally without family assistance or support." (Emphasis Added)

And, with respect to the added difficulty most foster youth have to face of being separated from their parents, possibly having experienced several foster placements, Ms. Stone continues:

> "Major life tasks in which foster children need special help are those involving issues of identity, trust and self-esteem, in addition to making decisions, preparing for future work, learning money management and household maintenance, finding a place to live, and forming healthy personal relationships. For foster youth, decision making may involve more than average difficulty because they may have a greater sense of failure about past decisions, and because they are more accustomed to having others make decisions for them - administrative agencies, parents, courts, foster parents, agency staff members and so forth. Many do not have a network of family or firends to call on for advice....Many foster youngsters who grew up in care blame themselves for the neglect and abuse they have experienced. Low self-esteem both results from and contributes to lack of success. Early failure in school caused them to dislike themselves, confirming many messages they were receiving from the world around them. To become independent they must have a sense of self-worth on which to build the confidence necessary to getting out on their own."

All of this takes time; however, because the current federal foster care subsidy ends at age 18 or, at state option, age 19, just as progress is being made in helping the youth develop this necessary self-worth, they are involuntarily leaving home -- "discharged" from care. What is needed is to continue care for youth up through age 21 and tie their continued subsidy to participation in an independent living program.

Among the states that we contacted, some continue, through state subsidies, to provide for foster youth up to age 21. One, Massachusetts, continues care up to age 22. One program manager in a state where the subsidy ends at 19 admitted to feeling as though their independent living efforts are wasted because "its ludicrous to think that at age 19, these children are going make it....but we have to pretend as we're waving them good-bye....but I know they'll be back, somehow." Every single program manager we spoke with in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, Texas and Ohio, favored extending the state option to age 21 because real success with respect to such youth truly becoming "independent" requires that they stay in care longer.

Therefore, the Child Welfare League of America strongly supports and urges favorable consideration of Sec. 101 of H.R. 2753, which would provide states the incentive of further assisting foster youth up to age 21 through the continuation of the federal foster care subsidy where the youth is participating in an independent living program.

INCLUSION IN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVE OF NON-AFDC FOSTER CARE CHILDREN: Currently, the Independent Living Initiative is limited to Title IV-E (AFDC) eligible youth which many states indicated has caused severe handicaps in administering the program. Moreover, in many instances states indicated that it has added to the delays in implementing the program since, wanting to include

their entire foster care caseload, they have requested funds from their state legislatures and as yet, in the case of Illinois and Connecticut, no action has been taken on their request. Therefore, it is unclear how they can proceed since the existing program strictly prohibits funds to be used for non-IV-E children. Even though all states indicated that additional funds may be needed to adequately address their entire caseloads, all states said they would, for the time being, strongly support just having the flexibility to provide services for all foster youth within their current allocations.

Therefore, the Child Welfare League of America strongly supports and urges favorable consideration of Sec. 102 of H.R. 2753, which would allow states the flexibility of providing independent living services to all foster care youth, regardless of whether they are eligible for Title IV-E funds. Clearly, the needs of non-Title IV-E youth are equal to and as important to address as the needs of Title IV-E youth. To create a situation where one group of children receives necessary services while another does not, as is now the case under current law, is not only administratively burdensome but simply unfair.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Thank you, Mr. Walcott.
Ms. Sabol.

STATEMENT OF BARBARA J. SABOL, EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. SABOL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee.

I do appreciate the opportunity to address this subcommittee as you consider reauthorization of funding for preparing youth residing in foster care to live independently.

I would first like to begin by commending you for having the vision to have developed this program, because as you have pointed out, to fail to prepare foster children for independent living is a tragedy, not only for the children, but for society in general, because ultimately it may be necessary for us to later provide public assistance, mental health services, and in the worst cases, criminal justice services to too many of these youngsters.

Although enacted into law in April of 1986, with an expected funding release date on the following October 1, New York State did not receive its grant award of $7.5 million until July 1, 1987, 8 months into the fiscal year. As you have heard from other States individually and from the American Public Welfare Association, this time lag did cause great difficulty in program planning and development.

During the period when the Department of Health and Human Services was withholding both Federal instructions and funding, States lost valuable program development time, and we are now faced with a situation where the program is coming to an end without the full 2-year program experience that Congress intended.

I think it is important to note that despite this problem, the funding did come to New York at a time when we were already making a commitment to creating a more pointed and expansive effort to serve the more than 6,300 youth 16 years of age or older who are in foster care.

We are now working very hard to use these Federal funds to supplement the efforts that we are undertaking on our own.

What I would like to do is very briefly describe several of the program initiatives that are going on in the State.

In 1987, New York put in place extensive regulations pertaining to case planning responsibility for youth who have a goal of independent living, and older youth who have spent considerable time in foster care.

The standards contained predischarge standards and post-discharge requirements.

As it concerns discharge standards, foster care and case planning agencies are required to provide increasingly structured notice to the youth themselves of their discharge plan and the date of discharge.

This helps get the youth both physically and mentally prepared for what to many of them is a terrifying prospect.

We also do not permit the discharge of youth to independent living unless appropriate and stable housing arrangements have

been secured. We are trying to minimize that problem you alluded to earlier, Congressman, of children leaving foster care and ending up in shelters.

As you are aware, there is no Federal financial participation in the provision of after care services. We see this as a great deficit, because these after-care services are very important to these youngsters, and we have determined that they must be provided if we are to have a safety net for these youngsters.

Therefore, we have developed a requirement of at least a 6-month trial period before discharge.

Let me tell you a little bit about how we will be using the $7.5 million for independent living. It will be used in part to do predischarge training for those IV-E eligible youth between the ages of 16 and 19, and it is projected that more than 1,600 of the possible eligible population of 2,600 will receive such services over the course of a year.

In addition, we are using these funds for a newly developed stipend program. The payment of the monthly stipend will enable youth to experience the challenge of managing their own money, accumulating limited savings to help them as they begin to live on their own, and to provide an incentive for youth to participate in the independent living skill and vocational training programs.

I think it is important to note that there are approximately the same number of foster children between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not eligible for IV-E funding for whom New York will pay almost $7 million for the complete cost of predischarge services and stipends.

So indeed there is a State-Federal partnership, and we should continue in partnership. The Federal Government also has an interest in these youngsters.

There is another program that I have described in more detail in my written testimony, the supervised independent living program. It is a very innovative program, and one in which youngsters are participating, and already expressing their positive feelings about the program.

Another program that we are currently in the planning stages of developing is something we are calling the foster corps. We all need to learn from the positive experiences that we have had, and job corps was one of those programs that did have some very positive outcomes.

So we have now developed, or are in the process of developing, a foster care program which places great emphasis on the combination of job training and education.

But as we know, foster children need something in addition. We have begun work with the United States Department of Labor to develop a program model which would permit youth, in essence, to remain in foster care but still participate in the job corps.

If this effort succeeds, it may provide a model for other States to consider.

In addition, under a grant from Action, the Federal Office of Volunteerism Initiatives, my department is engaged in a program whereby volunteers are being recruited in two large urban communities, and are being trained to work with foster care youth.

These are volunteers from business, trade, and professional worlds to provide career exploration, housing search assistance, and act as mentors for these youth.

In addition case management will remain with the local social service district or with the foster care agency.

There is another program that I would call your attention to that is set out in the testimony—I won't describe it—called the JIFY program. Again, focused on this objective of ensuring that when children leave the foster care system they are prepared for employment and independent living.

In May we will be holding in the State a major conference for 350 persons who work with older foster care children. This conference is intended to excite and educate the providers about some of the programs that I have just described, and some of the demonstration models, not only that are occurring in New York but that are being employed nationally.

This builds on a recently completed workshop on independent living requirements held 18 times throughout the State of New York.

Before closing, I want to stress that as a result of the time lag receiving Federal direction and Federal funding, we are only at the very early stages in the provision of many of the initiatives that I have mentioned.

As such it is difficult for us today to provide you hard data which documents the effectiveness of the individual initiatives. However, anecdotally, we are hearing less about significant numbers of foster discharges who are winding up in shelters for the homeless.

Likewise, our preliminary review of the job preparation initiatives which we have undertaken, indicate excellent results in relation to the youth locating stable employment.

I believe we will need 2 more years of experience with our entire program before we can prove its success, but prove its success we will. We are firmly committed to this effort.

Unfortunately, it is not always easy to convince State fiscal planners that a program should be undertaken and maintained if there appears to be no Federal recognition of the need.

I would again stress addressing the needs of these children must be done in partnership, the Federal Government, State, and local government, as well as voluntary agencies.

Let me make some recommendations now, recommendations which I believe are consistent with the provisions in Mr. Matsui's bill, and those include the following.

One, States should be provided with the option to claim independent living funds for non-IV-E foster children in need of independent living services.

We want to create children who leave the system and who can then live independently without the assistance of public assistance and other support programs.

We would recommend that States be provided with the option to claim independent living funds for services to foster children between the ages of 14 and 21.

Based on what we know about the complexity of the work world, we feel it very important that we start earlier than the age of 16.

We would further recommend that funds be made available to the States to provide voluntary aftercare services to foster care discharges until such youth turn 21 years of age.

We would recommend providing special funding to support program development for transitional apartments for youth still in foster care in order to promote gradual integration of such youth into the community. And there is such a program described in the testimony.

And finally, we would recommend to evidence a firm recognition of the importance of the independent living services program to put forth a multiyear commitment of Federal funding.

This will reassure States that they will not be left to stand alone, and likely bring forth a greater commitment of States resources.

I again appreciate this opportunity to appear, to speak about such a critical issue, not only for the children but for society.

Commissioner Perales and I look forward to working with you as your deliberations continue.

[The statement of Ms. Sabol follows:]

STATEMENT OF BARBARA J. SABOL, EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

INDEPENDENT LIVING TESTIMONY

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING ME WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS SUBCOMMITTEE AS YOU CONSIDER REAUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING FOR PREPARING YOUTH RESIDING IN FOSTER CARE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

AT THE OUTSET, LET ME COMMEND YOU FOR HAVING THE WISDOM TO HAVE DEVELOPED THIS PROGRAM. CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WHO WILL BE DISCHARGED TO LIVE ON THEIR OWN REQUIRE EXTENSIVE PREPARATION IN ORDER FOR THEM TO HAVE A REASONABLE CHANCE TO SUCCEED IN AN EVER MORE COMPLEX AND COMPETITIVE WORLD. WITHOUT THE PROVISION OF TARGETED SERVICES, WE IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES FIELD CAN RIGHTFULLY BE ACCUSED OF PREPARING THESE CHILDREN TO FAIL. TO FAIL IS A TRAGEDY FOR THE CHILDREN. IT IS ALSO AN EXPENSIVE FAILURE FOR SOCIETY IN GENERAL, AS IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO LATER PROVIDE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, AND IN THE WORST CASE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES TO TOO MANY.

ALTHOUGH ENACTED INTO LAW ON APRIL 7, 1986 WITH AN EXPECTED FUNDING RELEASE DATE ON THE FOLLOWING OCTOBER 1, NYS DID NOT RECEIVE ITS GRANT AWARD OF $7.5 MILLION UNTIL JULY 1, 1987, EIGHT MONTHS INTO THE FISCAL YEAR. AS YOU HAVE HEARD FROM

OTHER STATES INDIVIDUALLY AND FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION, THIS TIME LAG HAS CAUSED GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. DURING THE PERIOD WHEN HHS WAS WITHHOLDING BOTH FEDERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND FUNDING, STATES LOST VALUABLE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TIME. WE ARE NOW FACED WITH A SITUATION WHERE THE PROGRAM IS COMING TO AN END WITHOUT THE FULL TWO YEAR PROGRAM EXPERIENCE CONGRESS INTENDED.

EVEN WITH THIS PROBLEM, THE FUNDING DID COME TO NEW YORK AT A TIME WHEN WE WERE ALREADY MAKING A COMMITMENT TO CREATING A MORE POINTED AND EXPANSIVE EFFORT TO SERVE THE MORE THAN 6,300 YOUTH 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER IN FOSTER CARE. WE ARE WORKING HARD TO USE THESE FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS WE ARE UNDERTAKING ON OUR OWN.

DURING MY TESTIMONY I WILL BE DISCUSSING THE INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY NEW YORK TO ENSURE THAT OLDER YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD. AS I HAVE ALLUDED TO AND WILL FURTHER EXPLAIN IN MY TESTIMONY, ONLY SOME OF THESE INITIATIVES HAVE FEDERAL FUNDING PARTICIPATION. THUS I WILL BE MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS NOT ONLY FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM WITH INCREASED FUNDING, BUT ALSO FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY IN HOW STATES MAY CHOOSE TO EXPEND THEIR ALLOCATIONS.

In 1987 New York put in place extensive regulations pertaining to case planning responsibility for youth who have a goal of independent living and other older youth who have spent considerable time in foster care. The standards contain pre-discharge, discharge and post-discharge requirements. In the pre-discharge area we require that the youth receive focused independent living skills training both through the ongoing workplan that foster parents and child care staff have with the youth and through formalized classroom instruction. Vocational training must also be provided to such foster children unless they are performing at a passing level in an academic high school or college program.

As it concerns discharge standards, foster care and case planning agencies are required to provide increasingly structured notice to youth of their discharge plan and date for discharge. This helps to get the youth both physically and mentally prepared for what is for many of them a terrifying prospect. We also do not permit the discharge of a youth to independent living unless appropriate and stable housing arrangements have been secured.

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As you are aware, there is no federal participation in the provision of aftercare services. We in New York have determined that children going out to live on their own for the first time cannot be expected to do so without any continued support system. We have tried to develop a safety net through the requirement of at least a 6 month period of trial discharge to continue a reasonable level of casework contacts and the provision of necessary services to youth. Such youth may also be voluntarily returned to foster care if they experience significant trauma or homelessness. After trial discharge the foster care agency must continue to provide a minimal level of casework contacts until the youth reaches his or her 21st birthday.

The 7.5 million dollars is being utilized to pay for the pre-discharge training for those IV-E eligible youth between the ages of 16 and 19. It is projected that more than 1,600 of a possible eligible population of 2,670 will receive such services over the course of a year.

In addition, New York State is using these funds for a newly developed stipend program. The payment of the monthly stipends will enable youth to experience the challenge of managing their own money, accumulate limited savings to help them as they begin to live on their own, and provide an incentive to the youth to participate in the independent living skill and vocational training programs.

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME NUMBER OF FOSTER CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16-19 WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR IV-E FUNDING, FOR WHOM NEW YORK WILL PAY APPROXIMATELY 7 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE COMPLETE COST OF PRE-DISCHARGE SERVICES AND STIPENDS. ADDITIONALLY, BECAUSE SOME YOUTH STAY IN FOSTER CARE UNTIL THEY ARE TWENTY OR TWENTY-ONE TO COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION OR TRAINING AND BECAUSE EXPERTS EMPHASIZE THE VALUE OF INITIATING TRAINING FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS BY AGE 14, NEW YORK STATE HAS EXTENDED ITS PROGRAM TO A BROADER AGE GROUP THAN THAT PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL PROGRAM. NEW YORK PAYS THE TOTAL BILL FOR ALL POST-DISCHARGE SERVICES WHICH WE BELIEVE ARE AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.

ANOTHER INITIATIVE WHICH WE ARE DEVOTING INCREASED ATTENTION AND RESOURCES TO IS OUR SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES TRANSITIONAL APARTMENTS OR HOUSES FOR TWO OR THREE OLDER FOSTER CHILDREN WHICH ARE LOCATED IN THE COMMUNITY WITHOUT LIVE-IN STAFF BUT WITH ONGOING FOSTER CARE CASEWORK SUPPORT AND SERVICES. THIS PROGRAM IS NOT UNIQUE TO NEW YORK AND CAN HAVE DIFFERENT PROGRAM MODELS AND COMPONENTS. WHAT IS SPECIAL, HOWEVER, ABOUT THIS PROGRAM IS HOW WELL IT WORKS AND HOW APPRECIATIVE THE RESIDENTS ARE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A TRANSITIONAL LIVING ARRANGEMENT TO GET THEM PREPARED TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES. MY STAFF HAS LITERALLY BEEN THANKED

BY SUCH RESIDENTS FOR "FINALLY DEVELOPING A PROGRAM THAT THEY REALLY FEEL IS HELPFUL" AND THEN QUESTIONED AS TO "WHY DIDN'T YOU DO IT A LONG TIME AGO". BECAUSE THIS PROGRAM IS OFTEN POPULATED BY 19-20 YEAR OLDS WHO WOULD THEREFORE BE INELIGIBLE FOR TITLE IV-E FUNDING, THERE IS LITTLE FEDERAL FUNDING PARTICIPATION IN THIS INNOVATIVE PROGRAM. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT NEW YORK WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE 400 BEDS AVAILABLE UNDER THIS PROGRAM AT AN ANNUALIZED COST OF 9.4 MILLION DOLLARS.

A PROGRAM THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY IN THE PLANNING STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IS FOSTER CORPS, WHICH IS BASED UPON THE JOB CORPS MODEL. JOB CORPS, WHICH PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS ON A COMBINATION OF JOB TRAINING AND EDUCATION, IS NOT AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN STILL IN FOSTER CARE. UNFORTUNATELY MANY YOUTH WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM JOB CORPS STILL NEED TO REMAIN WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF A FOSTER CARE SETTING FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. THUS WE HAVE BEGUN TO WORK WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM MODEL WHICH WOULD PERMIT YOUTH, IN ESSENCE, TO REMAIN IN FOSTER CARE, BUT STILL PARTICIPATE IN JOB CORPS. IF THIS EFFORT SUCCEEDS IT MAY PROVIDE A MODEL FOR OTHER STATES TO CONSIDER.

UNDER A GRANT FROM ACTION, THE FEDERAL OFFICE OF VOLUNTARISM INITIATIVES, MY DEPARTMENT IS ENGAGED IN A PROGRAM WHEREBY VOLUNTEERS ARE BEING RECRUITED IN TWO LARGE URBAN COMMUNITIES

AND ARE BEING TRAINED TO WORK WITH FOSTER CARE YOUTH. VOLUNTEERS FROM THE BUSINESS, TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL WORLDS PROVIDE CAREER EXPLORATION, HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE AND ACT AS MENTORS FOR THE YOUTH. CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY WILL REMAIN WITH THE LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES DISTRICT/FOSTER CARE AGENCY, WHICH WORKS COOPERATIVELY WITH A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR ON ASSESSMENT, INDIVIDUAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF TRAINING/OTHER SERVICES NECESSARY TO HELP YOUTH TRANSITION SUCCESSFULLY TO INDEPENDENT LIVING.

FUNDED IN PART BY A HHS DISCRETIONARY GRANT AND TARGETED AT RUNAWAY/HOMELESS AND OLDER FOSTER CARE YOUTH, THE JOBS, INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUTH OR JIFY PROGRAM PROVIDES TRAINING IN EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING THROUGH UTILIZATION OF JOB CLUB AND OTHER GROUP SELF-HELP INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES IN TWO SITES-ALBANY AND NEW YORK CITY. BASED ON THE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH JIFY, THE STATE PROVIDES TRAINING STATEWIDE IN JIFY TECHNIQUES THROUGH A TRAINING CONTRACT WITH A MAJOR UNIVERSITY. IN ADDITION TO THE TRAINING CURRICULUM, A MAJOR PRODUCT OF THE JIFY PROJECT HAS BEEN A VIDEOTAPE THAT DEPICTS A JOB CLUB IN ACTION. THE 30 MINUTE VIDEO IS UTILIZED TO HELP MARKET THE JOB CLUB CONCEPT.

IN MAY, NEW YORK WILL BE HOLDING A MAJOR CONFERENCE FOR 350 PERSONS IN THE STATE WHO WORK WITH OLDER FOSTER CHILDREN. THIS CONFERENCE IS INTENDED TO EXCITE AND EDUCATE THE PROVIDERS

ABOUT SOME OF THE AFOREMENTIONED PROGRAM DEMONSTRATION MODELS AS WELL AS OTHER MODELS BEING EMPLOYED NATIONALLY. THIS BUILDS ON A RECENTLY COMPLETED WORKSHOP ON INDEPENDENT LIVING REQUIREMENTS HELD 18 TIMES THROUGHOUT NEW YORK. I WILL HAVE MY OFFICE PROVIDE YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, AND OTHER SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS, WITH THE DETAILS ON THE CONFERENCE SO THAT YOU MAY CONSIDER ATTENDING.

BEFORE CLOSING, I WANT TO STRESS THAT - AS A RESULT OF THE TIME LAG IN RECEIVING FEDERAL DIRECTION AND FEDERAL FUNDING - WE ARE ONLY AT AN EARLY STAGE IN THE PROVISION OF MANY OF THE INITIATIVES I HAVE MENTIONED. AS SUCH, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO PRODUCE FOR YOU TODAY HARD DATA WHICH DOCUMENTS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES. HOWEVER, ANECDOTALLY, WE ARE NO LONGER HEARING ABOUT SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF FOSTER CARE DISCHARGES WINDING UP IN SHELTERS FOR THE HOMELESS. LIKEWISE, OUR PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE JOB PREPARATION INITIATIVES WHICH WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN INDICATES EXCELLENT RESULTS IN RELATION TO THE YOUTH LOCATING STABLE EMPLOYMENT.

I BELIEVE WE WILL NEED TWO MORE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH OUR ENTIRE PROGRAM BEFORE WE CAN PROVE ITS SUCCESS. HOWEVER, NEW YORK IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THIS EFFORT. UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO CONVINCE STATE FISCAL PLANNERS THAT A PROGRAM SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AND MAINTAINED IF THERE APPEARS

TO BE NO FEDERAL RECOGNITION OF THE NEED. IN THAT REGARD, I ASK YOU TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM. YOUR DECISION WILL SEND AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT THE FEDERAL COMMITMENT FOR COMBATTING LONG-TERM DEPENDENCY FOR A VULNERABLE CLIENT GROUP. STATES WILL CLOSELY SCRUTINIZE THE OUTCOME OF REAUTHORIZATION DISCUSSIONS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND THIS NECESSARY PROGRAM.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS IN MR. MATSUI'S BILL, INCLUDE:

(1) PROVIDING STATES WITH THE OPTION TO CLAIM INDEPENDENT LIVING FUNDS FOR THE NON-IV-E ELIGIBLE FOSTER CHILDREN IN NEED OF INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES;

(2) PROVIDING STATES WITH THE OPTION TO CLAIM INDEPENDENT LIVING FUNDS FOR SERVICES TO FOSTER CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14 AND 21;

3) MAKING AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR STATES TO PROVIDE VOLUNTARY AFTERCARE SERVICES TO FOSTER CARE DISCHARGES UNTIL SUCH YOUTH TURN 21 YEARS OF AGE;

(4) PROVIDING SPECIAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR TRANSITIONAL APARTMENTS FOR YOUTH STILL IN FOSTER CARE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE GRADUAL INTEGRATION OF SUCH YOUTH INTO THE COMMUNITY; AND,

(5) FINALLY, TO EVIDENCE A FIRM RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROGRAM, TO PUT FORTH A MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING. THIS WILL REASSURE STATES THAT THEY WILL NOT BE LEFT TO STAND ALONE AND LIKELY BRING FORTH A GREATER COMMITMENT OF STATE RESOURCES.

THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU THIS MORNING. COMMISSIONER PERALES AND I WILL BE HAPPY TO WORK WITH YOU AS YOUR DELIBERATIONS CONTINUE.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Mr. Colon.

STATEMENT OF ALBERT A. COLON, CHIEF, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES BRANCH, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. COLON. Yes, good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee.

I am chief of the Family and Children's Services Branch for the California Department of Social Services. We are responsible for administering the independent living program as authorized by Congress.

And I would just like to first of all thank you for the opportunity to allow us to present California's views on the independent living program.

The California Department of Social Services, local county welfare departments, group home providers and foster family home providers welcome the independent living initiative as an invaluable resource to assist us in meeting previously unmet needs of older children in the State's foster care program. In order to implement program activity as quickly as possible, the department contracted with the California Community College system to provide statewide independent living skills training to foster parents and group home providers at a cost of approximately $940,000.

We also contract with the University of California at Davis, approximately $25,000, to provide training to county welfare directors and managers in regards to independent living.

The balance of the State's grant, $7.2 million, is allocated to the counties to develop program plans and provide direct services to foster youths. All counties are required to provide specific mandated services in the areas of educational and vocational alternatives and resources, and second, listings and referrals to community resources geared to the needs of young people. Additional optional services may be provided at the discretion of each individual county.

Program plans are to be tailored to meet the needs of the youth, and designed to link them with available community resources. This linkage will be accomplished in coordination with high school, educational and vocational programs, which provide moral, educational, development with job training programs in the public and private sectors, such as the job corps, job training and placement agencies, private employers, referrals to community, or State college financial aid offices for assistance in preparation for extended educational training, and referrals to testing and assessment services. Programs are intended to provide a range of services designed to provide participants with some basic skills necessary to live independently and help them access existing community resources that will continue to be available to them when they are no longer eligible for the independent living program.

In the following pages of the testimony, there are some examples of the types of services that are available in the State, both mandated and optional. And I would let the committee look through those.

California was officially notified in June of 1987, towards the end of June, of our independent living initiative grant award for Federal fiscal year 1987 for the $8 million. Legal and administrative processes necessary to formally incorporate the grant into the State budget were completed in November of 1987. The initial uncertainty about the availability of Federal funding, and the brief timeframes imposed by the Federal program instructions, did not take into consideration the time required to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide program tailored to the specific needs of the foster youth in the State. Therefore, California subvened the bulk of funds directly to the counties for local program development and in order to take maximum advantage of the funds prior to the December 30 deadline.

Even with the direct subvention of money to the counties, there has been insufficient time for counties to appropriately plan/coordinate a comprehensive program of services to set in place a full service delivery system, and to have that delivery system running for a full year. Counties in California are still in the process of developing the independent living program.

In the absence of specific Federal direction guidelines, California also developed comprehensive independent living program guidelines, for use by local county program administrators, in order to ensure consistency statewide, and to assist counties to maximize use of independent living program funds.

California believes that continued funding for the independent living initiative is necessary and appropriate. We expect to provide independent living services to over 5,000 federally eligible youth during this Federal fiscal year. We believe that ensuring educational and vocational training for youth prior to their leaving foster care, will prove to be cost effective, and will enable the youth to more easily enter the labor market and become productive, contributing members of society. We anticipate that the youth, by achieving a marketable skill, will gain employment and thereby eliminate the need to rely on the public welfare system.

In addition to the 5,000 Federally eligible youth, California has another 10,000 foster care youth aged 16 to 19 who could benefit from this program that are now excluded because of a lack of Federal eligibility. While we are aware of budgetary constraints and concerns at the national level, we ask that the opportunity for self maintenance be extended to all foster care youth, and that funding for this program be extended beyond Federal fiscal year 1988.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Colon follows:]

Testimony Before
Subcommittee on Public Assistance and
Unemployment Compensation
Presented by Albert A. Colon
Chief, Family and Children's Services Branch
California Department of Social Services

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Al Colon and I am Chief of the Family and Children's Services Branch for the California Department of Social Services. The Family and Children's Services Branch is responsible for administration of the Independent Living Initiative authorized by the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272) authorizing funds to States for service programs and activities to assist eligible children (aged 16 and over) in Title IV-E funded foster care to make the transition from foster care to independent living. Thank you for this opportunity to present California's views on the Independent Living Program (ILP) to the Committee.

The California Department of Social Services, local County welfare departments, group home providers and foster family home providers welcomed the Independent Living Initiative as an invaluable resource to assist us in meeting previously unmet needs of older children in the State's foster care system. In order to implement program activity as quickly as possible, the Department contracted with the California Community Colleges Foundation to provide statewide independent living skills training for foster parents and group home providers and with the University of California, Davis Extension to provide training to County welfare directors and managers.

The balance of the State's grant was allocated to the Counties to develop program plans and provide direct services to foster youth. All Counties are required to provide specific mandated services in the areas of 1) educational and vocational alternatives and resources; and 2) listings of and referrals to community resources geared to the needs of young people. Additional optional services may be provided at the discretion of the individual County.

Program plans are to be tailored to meet the needs of the youth and designed to link them with available community resources. This linkage will be accomplished through coordination with high school educational and vocational programs which provide General Education Development, with job training programs in the public and private sectors such as the Job Corps, Job Training and Placement Agencies, private employers, referrals to community or State college financial aid offices for assistance in preparation for extended educational or vocational training, and referrals to testing and assessment services. Programs are intended to provide a range of services designed to provide participants with some basic skills necessary to live independently and help them access existing community resources that will continue to be available to them when they are no longer eligible for the ILP.

Following are some examples of the types of services to be offered:

- Developing emancipation programs
- Training social workers, case managers, foster parents and group home providers regarding transition issues facing youth

- Developing "Survival Packages" for youth exiting foster care which contain items such as a birth certificate, educational certificates, health records, work registration, foster care placement records, social security card, survival manual, sample work application, names/addresses of references
- Providing youth conferences/retreats
- Developing community networking to provide broad support services to youth
- Working with local high schools and community colleges to ensure that vocational and extended educational classes provide information concerning skills necessary for successful emancipation and independent living
- Developing resource manuals for youth which comprehensively list community services and how to access them, contain information on recreational activities, peer support groups, transportation services, emergency services, local and national hotlines or similar resources
- Developing resource listings of available housing; referral to housing organizations; information on tenant/landlord relationships and legal rights

In addition to the basic program elements identified above, the following optional services will be offered by some of the Counties:

Job and Career Development:

- information on developing job/career interests and values, securing work permits and social security cards, applying for and keeping a job and California Labor Laws
- youth employment services
- Employment Development Department services
- school placement services which teach job finding skills
- how to complete an employment application
- how to complete a resume
- interviewing skills/employer expectations

Finances/Budgeting:

- understanding/utilizing wages and a checkbook
- organizing a budget, sample budgets
- shopping
- California laws related to consumer rights
- understanding mandatory tax and other payroll deductions
- tax withholding and refunds
- opening and using a checking and savings account
- establishing credit accounts

Living Independently:

- housing, how to look for housing
- utilities
- home management skills
- emancipation

- California laws related to tenant/landlord rights
- security deposits
- realistic assessment of foster/birth parents in their provision of emotional/financial support

Health/Counseling:

- nutrition, low cost nutritional foods
- role changes
- communication skills
- drug/alcohol abuse
- depression/suicide
- sexuality
- peer pressure
- California laws related to alcohol/drug abuse/child abuse and confidentiality
- high cost of medical services/low cost alternatives
- prevention measure to preserve physical and mental health
- community clinics providing mental health services/peer group and counseling services

California was officially notified in June 1987 of our Independent Living Initiative grant award for Federal Fiscal Year 1987 ($8,023,999). Legal and administrative processes necessary to formally incorporate the grant into the State budget were completed in November 1987. The initial uncertainty about the availability of Federal funding and the brief timeframes imposed by the Federal program instructions did not take into consideration the time required to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide program tailored to the specific needs of the foster youth in the State. Therefore, California subvened the bulk of funds directly to the Counties for local program development and in order to take maximum advantage of the funds prior to the September 30, 1988 deadline for expenditure.

Even with the direct subvention of funds to Counties, there has been insufficient time for Counties to appropriately plan/coordinate a comprehensive program of services, to set in place a full service delivery system and to have that delivery system running for a full year. Counties in California are still in the process of developing and implementing Independent Living Programs.

In the absence of specific Federal direction/guidelines, California also developed comprehensive Independent Living Program guidelines for use by local County program administrators in order to ensure consistency statewide and to assist Counties to maximize use of Independent Living Program funds.

California believes that continued funding of the Independent Living Initiative is necessary and appropriate. We expect to provide ILP services to over 5,000 Federally-eligible youth during this Federal Fiscal Year. We believe that ensuring educational or vocational training for youth prior to their leaving foster care will prove to be cost effective and will enable the youth to more easily enter the labor market and become productive, contributing members of society. We anticipate that the youth, by achieving a marketable skill, will gain employment and thereby eliminate the need to rely on the public welfare system.

In addition to the 5,000+ Federally-eligible youth, California has another 10,000+ foster care youth aged 16 to 19 who could benefit from this program but are excluded because of their lack of Federal eligibility. While we are aware of budgetary concerns at the national level, we ask that the opportunity for self maintenance be extended to all foster care youth and that funding for this program extend beyond Federal Fiscal Year 1988.

Thank you.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Hiller.

STATEMENT OF JOAN VITEK HILLER, ADOLESCENT SERVICES SECTION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION, MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. VITEK. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Joan Vitek Hiller of the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear here today to testify in support of extending the authority for the foster care independent living initiative.

I have become quite familiar with the issues surrounding youth transition to adult living from my work at a drop-in center for homeless youth, as well as my current work as a senior program evaluation specialist for the Minnesota adolescent services section, the department's agency charged with developing and administering Minnesota's title IV–E independent living program plans.

Our life skills program for the title IV–E youth are underway, and I come before you today to present our progress which has been made possible with this funding.

Rather than consolidating the funds to provide projects in just a few counties with high populations, our resources are devoted to title IV–E youth throughout Minnesota. This is one reason why we split our State allocation into two programs.

The first program is Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally program, SELF. This is a direct allocation to the county for social workers to use in providing life skills training for title IV–E adolescents.

Of the 1,949 adolescents in substitute care in Minnesota, 340 living in 60 of our counties were identified as eligible for the SELF program; 57 of our counties, with a total of 311 youth, opted to participate. This is a 91.5 percent voluntary participation rate.

Upon our approval of the counties' plans for SELF clients, the county receives $1,093 per client to help finance life skills training.

Minnesota counties are using SELF funds to finance college entrance examinations, such as the ACT or the SAT and finance college or vocational school application fees for college-bound youth who could otherwise not afford to take these exams or apply to these colleges.

Counties are also using the money to pay youth a wage for gaining work experience in what would otherwise be an unpaid position. For example, we have one pregnant teen who will work at a day care center, with SELF funds used to pay her salary. The day care center could not afford to pay her, and her social worker believed that it would be beneficial for her to get hands-on experience in caring for an infant. At the same time she is earning money she will need when once she has her baby.

Our counties are using the money to conduct weekly group sessions around issues of independence and life skills, such as budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, health maintenance and daily living skills. They are also using the money for such things as paying for driver education for clients.

Many counties are contracting for a group rate to provide driver education, and this especially helps rural youth as they begin to look for jobs, when the nearest job may be 5 or 10 miles away.

And I might add that this program looks so promising that the Refugee Unaccompanied Minor Program in our State secured a $60,000 grant to match $1,000 per each of their clients, for their clients to be included in the SELF program. In some counties we have Refugee Unaccompanied Minor clients and SELF clients in the same independent living skills group. And at this point it looks as if it is working out well. Attachment A contains a copy of our informational handout about the SELF program.

The second program under this title IV-E IL initiative is the Adolescent Life Skills Innovative Program Grants. Seven grants were awarded to public and private not-for-profit agencies to develop life skills programs for youth.

These programs include two foster parent training programs specializing in adolescent issues; one intensive life skills training program which is done as a 25-day wilderness camping experience; and three summer life skills programs in which clients have a summer job as part of their experiences. One of these summer programs is specifically targeted to the American Indian youth population in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Grantees are encouraged to develop these programs so that once our support ends, they can continue with either private foundation funds, county funds, or maybe even state funds.

When we funded these programs we emphasized developing programs that would continue past their initial grant period. Attachment B contains a copy of our informational handout on the ALS Innovative Program Grants.

At this point in our program we have made the following observations.

All adolescents in foster care are in need of this type of training, regardless of the source of funds which pay for their foster care. Time and time again our counties have called to ask why they could not include a particular client in the program, the real reason being that the client's family made perhaps a thousand dollars over the limits to be AFDC-eligible.

Expanding this program would afford us an economy of scale. In some rural counties we have two title IV-E adolescents and six or seven non-IV-E adolescents. If you added these clients together, there would be enough clients to conduct group training or contract for services on a group basis.

At this point, counties are frustrated at being limited to programing for just two of their many adolescents in foster care.

When weighed against the financial alternatives for supporting many of these clients once they leave substitute care, investment in life skills training for adolescents leaving substitute care is a minimal investment for a high payoff.

This funding helps break the cycle of long-term dependence on public assistance. The empowerment money spent per child in our State equates to less than 9 months of public assistance. If you also include the money spent for shelter beds and for picking these kids up off the street and processing them through the court system,

these funds equate to approximately 5 months of spending for all community services for that youth.

In addition, the more transitional time we have with this youth, the greater our chances of success for keeping this youth off long term public assistance.

Youth over age 18 need help with the transition to independence, whether this be a transitional living program such as supervised apartment living, whether it is help with medical care or aftercare support, or a more structured independent living skills training program for those few youth who need it.

Adolescents need some form of transitional support, not something that ends just because they turn 18, or just because they have been in a program for *x* number of months.

Expansion of this program to include youth up to the age of 21 would allow us to make this a complete process to independence, not an abrupt event which occurs when the client reaches a specified age.

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to address you this morning, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

[The statement of Ms. Hiller follows:]

Testimony of Joan Vitek Hiller
Children's Services Division
Minnesota Department of Human Services
before the
Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation
Committee on Ways and Means
March 31, 1988

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Joan Vitek Hiller of the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear here today to convey Minnesota's support of extending the authority and duration of the foster care independent living initiative.

I have become quite familiar with the issues surrounding youth transition to adult living from my work at a drop-in center for hard-core homeless youth, as well as my current work in the Adolescent Services Section of Minnesota's Children's Services Division.

At the Department of Human Services, our life skills programs for Title IV-E youth are underway. In my testimony I present our progress which was made possible with this funding. Copies of informational handouts on Minnesota's SELF and Adolescent Life Skills Innovative Program Grants may be found in Attachments A and B. In this written statement I shall discuss more of our observations and recommendations for further action.

Observations

At this point in our program we have made the following observations:

The transition to adulthood is a process, not an event. Supervision and instruction gradually evolve into support and advice as the youth becomes more adept at managing his/her own affairs and taking control of his/her life. This transition is not possible in the present substitute care system as the youth is either placed in an authoritarian facility or emancipated and go out on his/her own.

In order to assure the youth's success in this transitional process, there must be a support system from which the youth may wean him/herself rather than be arbitrarily terminated from the program regardless of whether or not the youth is ready.

All adults working with the youth must strive to reaffirm that the youth has the potential to be a satisfied, productive adult. Youth in substitute care often have a low sense of self esteem -- if they have any type of self-esteem at all. All adults working with the youth must reaffirm that (s)he is of value, belongs in the community, has a right to take part in community events, contribute to the community, can make friends, and has the right to use public facilities such as parks, libraries and schools. The youth must learn to become a part of the community, using the community and its members as resources and support for employment, health care, and sports/recreation, and other needs.

In order to make a successful transition to adulthood, the youth must be connected into the community. An important part of the life skills training process is to help the youth make connections and ties in the community. Breaking dependence on the child welfare system means connecting the youth with community

resources and helping him/her build positive relationships within the community.

In many cases, youth return to the public welfare system not only because they have needs, but also because that system is the only consistent entity with which they have had any experience. The social worker has become a form of "mother/father" to the youth, someone on whom to depend. While this dependence may be necessary at times in working with children and youth, it must be resolved in order to make the transition to young adulthood. When the youth feels connected into the community, the youth will turn to community members for help; public assistance becomes the last-resort form of assistance for which it was designed.

Youth must gradually be afforded more control in decisions affecting their lives. This must be done before the youth leaves substitute care so learning and taking risks may occur in a safe environment. Just as youth need work experience before they become adults, so do they need decision making experience. By affording them increasing amounts of decision making (and the accompanying responsibility), youth learn how to make sound decisions. They can make mistakes while still under some form of supervision, where support and guidance can keep a mistake from becoming a disaster. Youth will also be more personally invested in decisions they make themselves than in decisions made for them. The youth must live with his own decisions, not the Department of Human Services' case manager.

Substitute care must strive to provide the range of support provided by a family. As the youth grows older, the costs associated with preparing for emancipation increase. Money is needed for such things as driver's education, school field trips, college entrance exams, rent deposits, down payments on a car, or vocational school application fees.Until the availability of SELF dollars, no money was available for these expenses. Foster parents were in the precarious position of being nickled-and-dimed into assuming these costs out of their own pockets, or watching as their foster son or daughter was denied access to many activities due to his/her inability to pay the fees.

But support is much more wide-ranging than financial. Youth from intact families who strike out on their own most often do not stop all communication with their families, but rather use their families as resources and support as they establish themselves as adults. Support, often intangible, that these youth receive from their families includes: coming over for dinner; taking leftovers home; doing laundry at the parents' home; receiving "cast off" kitchenware, bedding, or other furnishings; taking part in family activities; help fixing things;advice, all types (household, financial, relationship, etc.); maintaining ties with other (extended) family members; emotional support; parent-initiated phone calls to "see how you're doing/could you use any help?" when the youth hasn't called for awhile; and, a friend.

While such support is taken for granted from youth in most families, we cannot assume this is available for youth in our foster care system. When these supports are not available, the youth can become anomic and unsure of him/herself.

This support underscores the fact the youth is a part of a community and that (s)he has community members who care about him/her.

County social workers are enthusiastic in their support for this program. Social workers have identified the need for life skills training for quite some time. Providing funds to allow them to carry out life skills training has reinforced the

relationship between the State and County. Social workers see the funds as recognition of their professional judgment of what a youth will need as (s)he prepares for adult life.

The response to the SELF program has been overwhelming, as can be seen in the following quotes, taken from county quarterly progress reports:

> It is clear that the SELF program addresses a need that has been prevalent for a considerable length of time. Independent living skills are often ignored in both functional and dysfunctional homes. Although children should be "allowed to be children," realistic accountability and productive use of time must be taught as well. This needs to be emphasized before the age of 18!
>
> This has been an active and exciting quarter. Our SELF clients have great input regarding what skills they would like to learn. Coordinator has learned to remain flexible and inventive. . . After 10 years of providing child protection services, coordinator (part-time County Social Worker) is enjoying SELF program immensely.
>
> Our agency appreciates the opportunity to provide this additional service to these kids. They are like family to us.
>
> I have a better relationship with my client because of the program.

The Title IV-E-IL program is highly cost-effective. When weighed against the financial alternatives for supporting many of these clients once they leave foster care ill-prepared for adult life, investment in life skills training is a minimal investment with a high payoff.

These funds help break the cycle of long-term dependence on public assistance. The empowerment money spent per child in Minnesota equates to less than nine months of public assistance. If the calculations of public assistance also include costs of emergency shelter beds and court services, SELF funds equate to approximately five months of public assistance and community services.

Action Needed

1. All adolescents in foster care need this type of training, regardless of the source of funds which pay for their care. The key variable is the adolescent's capability to live as an adult, not the socioeconomic status of his/her parents.

Time and time again our counties have called to ask why they could not include a particular client in the program; the reason was that the client's family made perhaps a hundred dollars over the limits of AFDC eligibility.

2. The program must be expanded to encompass a wider range of ages and emancipation approaches. Youth must be included from ages 12 to 21. This is not to say that these youth will remain in foster care homes through age 21, but that there will be some form of support and advice/guidance upon which the youth can count as (s)he is in the transitional process.

   While it is true that some youth may need more structured living situations for longer periods of time, the costs incurred by their services will be balanced by other adolescents who have fewer needs as they make the transition to adulthood.

   Assisting youth with their transitions to adulthood begins at an early age in most families. Beginning when the youth are approximately 12 or 13 years old, youth are taught good work skills and responsibility in "pre-job" jobs such as babysitting, snow shoveling, and corn detasseling. The preadolescent is also coached in general housekeeping and grooming skills as (s)he struggles with self-esteem and identity issues.

   Just as it is important to provide support at the end of the transitional process, it is equally important to help youth in the early stages of the transition so that these youth can begin to resolve issues of personal identity, relating to others, and self-esteem before they are asked to take on more identity-threatening activities such as employment or moving out of the foster home.

3. Support must emphasize the needs of the youth, not institutionalize another program. Using this funding to institute a national "project" of life skills training in which each adolescent progresses through the same set of activities will virtually destroy the benefits of this program. Youth must be considered individually; the flexibility to attend to the youth's <u>personal</u> goals and needs is critical to the success of that youth's transition to adulthood.

   No one project can adequately serve all youth. Instituting projects at the state level forces social workers to find youth to fill the projects' quotas rather than find activities which meet the youths' needs. The result is that youth are placed in groups which only "approximately" fit their needs or interests.

   Life skills training must take each youth at his/her level of development and encourage that youth toward his/her desired occupation and lifestyle as an adult. This is done by first listening to the youth and talking through his/her ideas. No one standardized program is equipped to listen and respond to all youth.

Individual plans and activities may take more time to monitor and evaluate, but that level of quality is crucial if we are to expect these youth to emerge from the substitute care system successfully.

4. States must work with, and encourage counties to work with, private, not-for-profit agencies to develop plans and activities which will benefit youth while helping them make connections in the community. Community based agencies stimulate the community's response to these youth, creating in the community a sense of responsibility to help the youth. At the same time, the youth is building connections within the community and learning that (s)he is welcome in the community. The youth also learns that there are places other than the State to get help.

   One of the goals of life skills training is to break the cycle of dependence of the welfare system. It is not possible to wean a youth from depending upon the State without teaching that youth where to hook into more appropriate places for emotional, intellectual or financial support.

   An often overlooked benefit of the youth's connection into the community is the increased sense of self-esteem and trust in him/herself that results from becoming a member of the community. Not only will the youth seek help from the members of his/her community, but (s)he will also begin to contribute to the community. As the youth becomes more confident of his/her abilities, interdependence with the community occurs.

   In addition to providing some grant funding to private, not-for-profit agencies, the State must provide technical assistance, networking, and information to these agencies to help strengthen community resources.

Finally, it is important to recognize the fact that we took on the responsibility to prepare these youth for adult living when we removed the child from his/her natural home and were unsuccessful at obtaining a return home or an adoptive home. In addition, return home or an adoptive home are inappropriate options for some youth. These programs are not "gifts" to these youth, but rather entitlements -- entitlements which do not yet reach all youth who have the right to them. We must assist these youth in taking their places as adults in society. We must teach them to fly before pushing them from the nest.

I thank you again for the opportunity to address you this morning in support of extending the authority for the foster care independent living initiative. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Minnesota presents:

SUPPORT FOR EMANCIPATION AND LIVING FUNCTIONALLY (SELF)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services recognizes the need for Life Skills training and support for all youth preparing to leave substitute care. Making this program accessible to all eligible Title IV-E youth was a top priority in planning and implementation of these programs. One component of Life Skills training through the Title IV-E-IL program is the SELF program. Therefore, Minnesota set aside $340,000 out of its Title IV-E-IL allocation to help fund life skills activities in the counties.

- Out of the estimated 340 youth eligible for the SELF program, 311 youth from 57 counties are participating (91.5% of those eligible).
- Upon approval of their plan to help the client with life skills, counties received $1093 per client to help finance life skills training.
- Staff at the state level include one and one-half program advisors and one program evaluator. Each program advisor has responsibility for providing assistance to one half of the counties in the state; the program evaluator is responsible for developing and maintaining both demographic and assessment data on all clients in the state.
- The State Adolescent Services Section publishes a monthly newsletter: **SELF SUPPORT**. This newsletter keeps county workers up to date on ideas for program planning, conferences or social services training of interest, other potential sources for funding for non Title IV-E youth, and general information on adolescent life skill needs.
- State staff have conducted regional "brainstorming" sessions as well as one two day workshop in Group Training Models for Older Adolescents. More training meetings and idea-sharing sessions are planned at the conclusion of the first year of SELF.

Minnesota counties are using SELF funds to:

- pay for driver's education for clients (one county negotatied a "group rate" for its clients and saved a considerable sum over the cost of individual driver's training packages!);
- provide career counseling and vocational training;
- secure tutors and other forms of remedial education;
- conduct a weekly group session around issues of independence and life skills such as budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, health maintenance, and daily living skills;
- finance college entrance examinations (such as the SAT or ACT) and college application fees for college-bound youth;
- prepare out-of-school youth for their GED examinations;
- pay youth a "wage" for gaining work experience in what would otherwise be a unpaid position (one pregnant teen is working at a day care center to learn child care skills before she has her baby);
- hire a part-time life skills coordinator to assess clients' needs and conduct or contract programs for each youth.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

Adolescent Services Section
Children's Services Division
Department of Human Services
444 Lafayette
St. Paul, MN 55155-3832

Minnesota

ADOLESCENT LIFE SKILLS INNOVATIVE PROGRAM GRANTS

The following six programs are made possible through Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL program. For information on these programs, please contact Joan Vitek Hiller at 612/296-2612.

Bemidji State University (BSU) Outdoor Program Center. Bemidji State University plans a 25 day intensive life skills program conducted as a part of a wilderness/camping experience; the project has been designed to accomodate two groups of eight Title IV-E youth. Clients are accepted from throughout Minnesota.

Bethany Crisis Shelter/Camp Widjiwagan. This project is conducted as a cooperative venture between two agencies with no previous working relationship: Bethany Crisis Shelter in Duluth, Minnesota, and Camp Widjiwagan in Ely, Minnesota. Clients will partake in summer independent living skills training through Bethany Crisis Shelter and then take part in a wilderness life skills experience under the direction of YMCA Camp Widjiwagan.

Face to Face Health and Counseling Service. Located in St. Paul and designed to serve the clients in the Twin Cities area, this summer program provides independent living skills training at weekly meetings. A summer job is planned as a part of each client's program experience.

Hennepin County Community Social Services. Using the Eastern Michigan model for foster parent training, this project will afford county workers throughout Minnesota the opportunity to develop their capacity for training foster parents to specialize in working with adolescents.

Professional Association of Treatment Homes. This project will provide foster parents' training for those foster parents who specialize (or wish to specialize) in serving and adolescent population. Training will be held in Bemidji, the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and one site yet to be determined.

Upper Midwest American Indian Center. Targeted to meet the needs of American Indian adolescents in Title IV-E foster care, this agency will conduct a group independent living skills program coupled with American Indian History and Language education. This program is designed to serve American Indian youth throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Grantees were awarded contracts with the understanding that they would develop their programs and provide a set number of 'scholarships' to Title IV-E eligible adolescents. Counties are then able to include some of their clients in these ALS programs at low cost or no cost.

Grantees are encouraged to develop strong working relationships with the counties. At the end of this grant period some of these programs may continue on other sources of support; with enough support these programs could also be expanded to include any adolescent in substitute care who would benefit from such a program. ALS grants are giving agencies the ability to develop and provide these new programs which will help meet the high demand for adolescent life skills training.

For more information, contact:

Joan Vitek Hiller
Adolescent Services Section
Children's Services Division
Department of Human Services
444 Lafayette
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3832

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Lessard.

STATEMENT OF JULIE LESSARD, ADOLESCENT SERVICES SPECIALIST, ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Ms. LESSARD. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and committee members.

I am Julie Lessard, the adolescent services specialist of Arizona Department of Economic Security responsible for coordinating the title IV-E independent living initiative.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify this morning.

I am in support of what all of the panelists here have shown concern for, particularly Ms. Sabol's comment on after care and followup services.

The safety net which she mentioned is one of the biggest components missing in our system's effort to assist these youth.

I have been asked to testify as to the success of the Arizona independent living subsidy program.

In 1983 the Arizona Legislature passed an amendment to the dependency statute, ARS 8-241 and 8-251, which authorize the Arizona Department of Economic Security to approve and subsidize independent living as a placement alternative to foster care for dependent youth.

The youth must be 17 years of age, and employed and/or enrolled in fulltime training. The independent living subsidy program provides these young adults in foster care an opportunity to live on their own while still receiving services and supervision from the department until they reach 18 or finish high school.

Arizona also has a law that allows for youth to voluntarily stay in foster care after their 18th birthday and until their 21st birthday in order to complete high school.

The youth receives the following. Monthly payments, up to $545. Complete medical coverage, and intensive comprehensive guidance and supervision by both case manager and a volunteer community adviser.

Each subsidy request must be approved by the program administrator, and reviewed the court and the supreme court foster care review board every 6 months, for those who remain in custody.

At present there are approximately 25 youths taking advantage of this program statewide. The average length of stay in the program is six months. One-third of the youth stay in the program beyond their 18th birthday.

Based on my 3-year experience as a case manager in the young adult program, and as a person currently designated by the administrator to approve the independent living subsidy requests, I can testify that we have had no serious disasters with any youth placed in the program.

The program can only be seen as a benefit to our youth in foster care. And without a program like this, many youth would not have a motive for preparing for independent living, or the experience of confidently moving out on a trial basis with system support.

And just a couple of remarks regarding the title IV-E independent living initiative. Arizona has been building specific programs for use in foster care since 1983. We have used the title IV-E inde-

pendent living funds to expand our services to youth, particularly in the rural areas.

However, much work still needs to be continued if we want to adequately assist these youth in successful independent living.

One reason for the delay in implementing these programs is the amount of time necessary to hire staff and contract out for services with community agencies, despite the other things that people have mentioned.

Continued funding is a must if our society is to expect our foster youth to be successful contributing adults, rather than dependent upon public welfare agencies for years to come.

Lastly, I would like to add that the title IV-E independent living initiative should be made available to all youth in foster care for the following reasons.

Because the services made available with title IV-E independent living initiative dollars are limited to a specific population, it is highly discriminating to non-IV-E youth.

It is very difficult to explain to a non-IV-E youth why one of his peers can have a matching savings account and he cannot. It is terribly unfair.

An unsurmountable amount of time, energy and money is going toward trying to work around the limitations and stringent guidelines of the title IV-E independent living initiative.

In Arizona almost 10 times the amount of youth could benefit from these funds, if they were available to all youth in foster care.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak.

[The statement of Ms. Lessard follows:]

Testimony of
Julie Lessard, M.S.W.
Adolescent Services Specialist
Arizona Department of Economic Security
Before the
Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation
Committee on Ways and Means
March 31, 1988

Arizona's Independent Living Subsidy Program

-- In 1983 the Arizona Legislature passed an amendment to the Dependency Statute (ARS 8-241 and 8-251) which authorized the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) to approve and subsidize independent living as a placement alternative to foster care for dependent youth.

-- The youth must be 17 years of age and employed and/or enrolled in full time training.

-- The Independent Living Subsidy Program (ILSP) provides these young adults in foster care an opportunity to live on their own while still receiving services and supervision from the ADES until they reach 18 or finish high school. (Arizona law also allows for youth to voluntarily stay in foster care after their 18th birthday and until their 21st birthday in order to complete high school).

The youth receives:

-- monthly payments up to $545.
-- complete medical coverage
-- intensive, comprehensive guidance and supervision by both case manager and volunteer community advisor.

-- Each subsidy request must be approved by the program administrator and reviewed by the court and the Supreme Court Foster Care Review Board every six months (for those who remain in custody).

-- At present there are approximately 25 youth taking advantage of this program statewide.

-- The average length of stay in the program is 6 months.

-- One third of youth stay in the program beyond their 18th birthday.

-- Based on my 3 year experience as a casemanager in the Young Adult Program and as the person designated by the Administrator to approve the ILSP requests, I can testify

that:

--We have had no serious disasters with any youth placed in the program.

--The program can only be seen as a benefit to our youth in foster care.

--Without a program like this, many youth would not have a motive for preparing for living independently or the experience of confidently moving out on a trial basis with system support.

Remarks on the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative

--Arizona has been building specific programs for youth in foster care since 1983. We have used the Title IV-E Independent Living funds to expand our services to youth particularly in the rural areas.

--One reason for the delay in implementing these programs is the amount of time necessary to hire staff and contract out to other agencies for services.

--Continued funding is a must if our society is to expect our foster care youth to be successful, contributing adults rather than dependent on government agencies for years to come.

-- Lastly, I would like to add that the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative should be made available to all youth in foster care for the following reasons:

--Because the services made available with Title IV-E Initiative dollars are limited to the specific population, it is highly discriminating to non-IV E youth. It is very difficult to explain to a non-IV E youth why one of his peers can have a matching savings account and she/he cannot.

--An insurmountable amount of time, energy and money is going toward trying to work around the limitations and stringent guidelines of the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative.

--In Arizona almost 10 times the amount of youth could benefit from these funds if they were available to all youth in foster care.

THE ARIZONA INDEPENDENT LIVING SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The Facts

...Preparing Foster Youth For Independence

PAT-286 (4-87)

What is the Independent Living Subsidy Program *(ILSP)*?

The Independent Living Subsidy Program provides young adults currently in foster care an opportunity to live independently without in-home supervision. Depending upon the youth's individual budget and needs, the Department of Economic Security *(DES)* will make payments directly to the youth for food, shelter and living expenses. Medical care is provided through a Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program *(CMDP)* card.

How do I become eligible for the Independent Living Subsidy Program?

A young adult must:

- Be 17 years of age or older;
- Be in DES custody;
- Be involved in academic/vocational training and/or employment geared toward self-sufficiency;
- Be willing to complete or have completed the Independent Living Skills Training as determined by his/her case manager;
- Have demonstrated an ability to act responsibly through, for example, completion of assigned tasks, individual goal-setting, decision-making, ability to find and keep a job, a knowledge of basic living skills and a beginning of a savings account;
- Present, in conjunction with his/her case manager and other involved adults, a written plan outlining how he/she will move from this subsidy-living arrangement to total independence;
- Present a proposed living arrangement, i.e. apartment, YMCA or such to his/her case manager;
- Be willing to cooperate with the DES.

Who needs to approve the plan?

Based upon the eligibility requirements and the independent living plan for the young adult, review and approval by the DES case manager, District Program manager, the DES Director and the Juvenile Court Judge needs to occur.

NOTE: Young adults can begin to prepare for the Independent Living Subsidy Program and actually be accepted into the program before their 17th birthday. According to state law, however, young adults may not begin living independently until they have reached their 17th birthday.

What kind of supervision is required?

Besides supervision by a DES case manager, each young adult will be assigned an adult from the community to provide additional supervision. The DES case manager will work closely with the young adult and provide supportive counseling, direction and instruction as needed. The adult from the community, known as the community advisor, will serve as a friend who assists the young adult in seeing that his/her basic needs and responsibilities are met in areas such as budgeting, home management and following the independent living plan.

NOTE: The young adult is expected to cooperate with the above individuals.

How do you know what everyone's responsibility is?

A written contract between the young adult, the DES case manager and the community advisor will be required before the young adult can be placed in the Independent Living arrangement. The contract will outline the specific responsibilities of the youth as well as the supervisory responsibilities of the DES case manager and the community advisor. In addition, it will include the agreed-upon place of residence, the young adult's monthly budget and identification of potential problems/barriers and solutions that the youth, case manager and community advisor perceive in working toward self-sufficiency. The contractual agreement is subject to change only if negotiated and signed by the above three parties.

What happens if I do not carry out my part of the written contract?

The maximum consequence that the young adult faces is termination from the Independent Living Subsidy Program which will result in his/her being returned to foster care status. As problems arise, team meetings *(young adult, DES case manager, community advisor)* will occur to determine the best course of action.

What happens if I damage the apartment or room that I am renting?

The young adult will be held accountable for his/her actions.

What are my rights?

The young adults on Independent Living status have the following rights:

- Right to receive assistance, guidance and support to prepare themselves for successful independent living;
- Right to request a team meeting when problems arise, i.e. problems with the community advisor, their case manager, jobs or landlords;
- Right to receive health, dental and eye care, as well as family planning information and care when needed and when appropriate.
- Right to be actively involved in any plans or decisions affecting his/her life;
- Right to enjoy successful independent living.

For further information contact your DES case manager.

DES Arizona Department of Economic Security — Moving People Toward Self-Sufficiency

PROGRAMA DE SUBSIDIO PARA VIDA INDEPENDIENTE EN ARIZONA

Datos

Encaminando a los jóvenes bajo cuidado temporal hacia la independencia

¿Qué es el Programa de Subsidio para Vida Independiente?

El Programa de Subsidio para Vida Independiente ofrece una oportunidad de vivir independientemente, sin supervisión en el hogar, a los adultos jóvenes quienes al presente están bajo cuidado temporal. A base del presupuesto y de las necesidades individuales del joven, el Departamento de Seguro Económico (DES) hará pagos directos al joven para comida, albergue y gastos de subsistencia. El cuidado médico es provisto mediante uso de la tarjeta del Programa Médico y Dental Comprensivo (CMDP).

¿Qué debe hacer para ser elegible para el Programa de Subsidio para Vida Independiente?

El adulto joven debe:

- *Haber cumplido 17 años de edad;*
- *Estar bajo custodia del DES;*
- *Participar de algún entrenamiento y/o empleo académico/ vocacional con la intención de alcanzar la suficiencia propia;*
- *Haber completado, o estar dispuesto(a) a completar, el Entrenamiento en Destrezas para Vida Independiente según determinado por el administrador de su caso;*
- *Haber demonstrado capacidades de actuar responsablemente mediante, por ejemplo, la finalización de tareas asignadas, la fijación de metas individuales, la toma de decisiones, la habilidad de encontrar y conservar un empleo, el conocimiento de las destrezas básicas de subsistencia y la posesión de una cuenta de ahorros;*
- *Presentar, con la ayuda del administrador de su caso y demás adultos implicados, un plan escrito que exponga los principios generales de cómo él o ella piensa efectuar la transición de este plan de subsidio hacia la independencia total;*
- *Presentar un propuesto plan de vivienda, tal como un apartamento, una habitación en la YMCA etc., al administrador de su caso;*
- *Estar dispuesto(a) a cooperar con el DES.*

¿Quién debe aprobar el plan?

El administrador de casos del DES, el administrador del programa en el distrito, el director del DES y el juez del Tribunal Juvenil deberán revisar y aprobar el plan para la vida independiente del adulto joven según los requisitos de elegibilidad.

NOTA: Los adultos jóvenes pueden comenzar su preparación para el Programa de Subsidio para Vida Independiente y recibir aceptación en el mismo antes de cumplir 17 años. Sin embargo, la ley estatal no permite la transición de los jóvenes a una vida independiente antes de que hayan cumplido 17 años de edad.

¿Qué tipo de supervisión es necesaria?

Además de la supervisión provista por el administrador del caso en el DES, a cada joven se le asignará un adulto de la comunidad quien le ofrecerá supervisión adicional. El administrador del caso en el DES trabajará estrechamente con el joven y le ofrecerá consejería de sostén, instrucción y orientación según sean necesarias. El otro adulto, conocido como el consultor en la comunidad, actuará como un(a) amigo(a) quien asiste al joven en el cumplimiento de sus necesidades y responsabilidades básicas en áreas como preparación de presupuestos, manejo del hogar y cumplimiento del plan.

NOTA: Se espera que el joven coopere con las personas mencionadas arriba.

¿Cómo sabe cada cual cuáles son sus responsabilidades?

Antes de colocar al joven bajo el plan de Vida Independiente, es requisito hacer un contrato escrito entre el joven, el administrador del caso en el DES y el consultor en la comunidad. El contrato esbosará las responsabilidades específicas del joven así como las responsabilidades de supervisión por parte del administrador del caso y el consultor en la comunidad. También indicará el lugar acordado de residencia y el presupuesto mensual del joven e identificará problemas, barreras y soluciones potenciales que el joven, el administrador del caso y el consultor en la comunidad perciben posibles durante la transición hacia la suficiencia propia del joven. Se podrá hacer cambios en este acuerdo contractual sólo mediante negociación entre las tres partes mencionadas y la firma de éstas en el contrato.

¿Qué ocurre si no cumplo con mi parte del contrato escrito?

La consecuencia mayor para el joven sería su terminación en el Programa Independiente y el regreso al cuidado temporal. Cuando surjan problemas se coordinarán reuniones entre los miembros del equipo (el joven, el administrador del caso en el DES y el consultor en la comunidad) para determinar las medidas más convenientes.

¿Qué ocurre si causo daños en el apartamento o la habitación que alquilo?

El adulto joven será responsable por todas sus acciones.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos?

Los adultos jóvenes en el Programa de Vida Independiente tienen los siguientes derechos:

- *Derecho a recibir asistencia, orientación y apoyo en su preparación para una vida independiente exitosa;*
- *Derecho a pedir reuniones entre los miembros del equipo cuando surgen problemas por ejemplo con el consultor en la comunidad, con su administrador de caso, con empleos o con arrendadores;*
- *Derecho a recibir cuidado dental, de la salud y de la visión, así como información y cuidado pertinente a la planificación familiar siempre cuando sea necesario y apropiado;*
- *Derecho a la participación activa en cualquier plan o decisión que afecte la vida de ella o él;*
- *Derecho a disfrutar de una vida independiente exitosa.*

Para mayor información, comuníquese con el administrador de su caso en el DES.

FOSTER CARE YOUTH NEEDS YOU!

Leaving Foster Care...

"It's scary. . . after having someone control you for so long, all of a sudden you're 18 and. . . go at it! Most teenagers, whether in foster care or not, when they're 18, they don't know what they want to do."

Young adult describing her feelings on leaving the state's care

PAT-488 (2-97)

FOSTER CARE YOUTHS NEED:

- Volunteers to serve as "Friends."
- Employment and training opportunities.
- Assistance in locating suitable housing.
- Guidance in accessing post-secondary training and education.
- Community support during the difficult transition from a dependent living situation to a position of self-sufficiency.

WHO ARE THEY?

- Of the 274,000 foster children in the U.S. today, more than 50% are teenagers.
- In Arizona, there are 1,200 youths over age 12 in foster care.
- 50% of the Arizona youth leaving foster care will immediately live on their own.

These young people have been victims of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, or their parents abandoned or were unable to care for them sometimes due to mental illness, incarceration or death. At the "magic" age of 18, they are expected to go into the world, get a job and an apartment, manage money and become successfully independent.

WHY ARE THEY ALONE?

For most young adults, leaving home to be "on their own" means a voluntary decision to leave the family unit. They are emotionally and financially prepared for independence, and have the advantage of their natural families to fall back on as life crises arise.

State law requires the majority of youth to leave foster care at the age of 18. They may have no or limited ties with their natural family. The state that served as their primary caretaker, however effective, is no longer there. The emancipation of young persons from foster care often means the abrupt removal of their supportive ties.

Many adolescents remain in their parent's home well beyond their 18th birthday, and would likely fare poorly if suddenly put out on their own when they reach that age. How would your children do?

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE COMMUNITY DOESN'T HELP?

If left unassisted in their transition to self-sufficiency, young adults may become a burden to society; takers instead of givers.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) is addressing this difficult transition for foster care youth leaving state care. Helping them to become successful, contributing adults in society requires considerable preparation and planning. Various programs have been implemented that offer transitional living experiences, independent living skill training and self-esteem building. DES needs the support and involvement of the community to assist in this preparation.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Help is needed in these areas:

- **Community volunteers** to be matched with youth being discharged from care. The volunteer will assist in the difficult transition into society, and be available when daily life obstacles arise. The volunteer often provides a "safety net" for these young people as they begin to experience firsthand the numerous problems that "being on your own" can bring.
- **Employment and training opportunities.** Businesses and "mentors" are needed to train these young people in the job market.
- **Low-cost housing.** Assistance in locating apartments and the proper filling out of leases is also needed.
- **Discounts** on start-up deposits from telephone and utility companies.
- Church or civic groups to donate **"starter kits"** which include toasters, silverware, towels and other necessities to the emancipating youths.
- Used **furniture** and discount **household items.**
- Guidance accessing **post-secondary training, educational and vocational programs.** Assistance is also needed to help many young people obtain a knowledge of basic **skills.**
- Banks to assist emancipating youths in opening **checking and savings accounts.**

Many of these young adults feel undeserving of a place in the community. It makes sense to invest in their well-being. You can make a difference!

Call your local DES office, and ask for the foster care supervisor.

DES Arizona Department of Economic Security — Moving People Toward Self-Sufficiency

¡LOS JOVENES BAJO CUIDADO TEMPORAL LE NECESITAN!

Dejar el cuidado temporal...

"Asusta. . . después de tanto tiempo bajo control de otras personas, de repente tienes 18 años y. . . ¡el mundo espera! La mayoría de los adolescentes, en cuidado temporal o no, cuando cumplen 18 no saben qué quieren hacer."

Joven describiendo sus sentimientos al dejar el cuidado estatal

LOS JOVENES BAJO CUIDADO TEMPORAL NECESITAN:

- Voluntarios que sirvan como "amigos."
- Oportunidades de trabajo y entrenamiento.
- Ayuda para localizar vivienda apropiada.
- Asesoramiento para lograr acceso a entrenamiento y educación postsecundaria.
- Apoyo de la comunidad para enfrentar las dificultades de la transición de una situación de dependencia a una posición de autosuficiencia.

¿QUIENES SON ESTOS JOVENES?

- Más del 50% de los 274,000 hijos temporales en los E.E.U.U. son adolescentes.
- Arizona provee cuidado temporal a 1,200 jóvenes mayores de 12 años.
- El 50% de los jóvenes que dejan el cuidado temporal en Arizona de inmediato pasan a vivir por cuenta propia.

Estos jóvenes han sido víctimas de abuso o negligencia física, emocional o sexual, o sus padres los han abandonado o a veces no han podido cuidarlos debido a enfermedad mental, encarcelamiento o muerte. De pronto, se presume que al llegar a la edad "mágica" de 18 años salgan al mundo, encuentren trabajo y vivienda, manejen dinero y se independicen exitosamente.

¿PORQUE ESTAN SOLOS?

Para la mayoría de los adolescentes, irse de su casa para vivir "por su cuenta" obedece a una decisión voluntaria de alejarse de la unidad familiar. Están preparados emocional y económicamente para la independencia, y tienen la ventaja de poder acudir a su familia natural según surjan las crisis de la vida independiente.

La ley estatal requiere que la mayoría de los jóvenes dejen el cuidado temporal cuando cumplen 18 años. Estos jóvenes tienen poca o ninguna relación con su familia natural, y el estado, sin importar cuán efectivo haya sido en su papel como encargado principal, ya no puede atenderles. Su proceso de independización muchas veces implica la pérdida abrupta del apoyo que tenían.

Muchos adolescentes permanecen en la casa de sus padres buen tiempo después de su 18vo cumpleaños, y probablemente les iría mal si de pronto se encontrasen solos al llegar a esa edad. ¿Cómo les iría a sus hijos adolescentes?

¿QUE SUCEDE SI LA COMUNIDAD NO APOYA A ESTOS JOVENES?

Si los adultos jóvenes no reciben asistencia durante esta transición a una posición de autosuficiencia, se convertirán en una carga para la sociedad; en recipientes y no benefactores.

El Departamento de Seguro Económico de Arizona (DES) trata de ayudar a los jóvenes en esta difícil transición de convertirse en adultos exitosos y contribuyentes a la sociedad, lo cual requiere mucha preparación y planificación. Hemos instituido varios programas para proveer destrezas necesarias para la transición, entrenamiento para la vida independiente y promoción de la autoestima. DES necesita el apoyo y la cooperación de la comunidad para asistirle en esta preparación.

¿QUE PUEDE HACER <u>USTED</u> PARA AYUDAR?

Se necesita ayuda en las áreas siguientes:

- **Voluntarios en la comunidad para asistir a los jóvenes quienes salen de cuidado temporal. El voluntario ayudará al joven en la transición y estará a su disposición según surjan los obstáculos del diario vivir. A menudo los voluntarios proveen un "mecanismo de seguridad" para los jóvenes cuando comienzan a experimentar la variedad de problemas que llegan con la independencia.**
- **Oportunidades de empleo y entrenamiento.** Negocios y "tutores" para entrenar a estos jóvenes en el mercado de trabajo.
- **Vivienda de precio módico,** y ayuda para localizar apartamentos y para llenar correctamente los contratos de alquiler.
- **Descuentos** de las compañías de teléfono y servicios públicos para los depósitos iniciales.
- Grupos religiosos o cívicos que donen **"equipos iniciales"** que incluyan tostadoras, servicio de mesa, toallas y otras cosas necesarias para los jóvenes emancipados.
- **Muebles** usados y descuentos en **artículos para el hogar.**
- Asesoramiento para ingreso a **programas vocacionales, de entrenamiento y educación postsecundaria.** Muchos jóvenes necesitan ayuda también para obtener conocimientos en las destrezas básicas.
- Bancos dispuestos a asistir a los jóvenes encaminados hacia la independencia en abrir **cuentas de cheque y de ahorros.**

Muchos de estos jóvenes sienten que no merecen un puesto en la comunidad. Vale la pena invertir en su bienestar. ¡Su cooperación puede ser muy significativa!

Llame a la oficina local del DES y pida hablar con el supervisor de cuidado temporal.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Well, first of all, to all of the panelists, thank you for your very useful testimony. It is quite clear to all of you, certainly, that ending the program now before it is basically started, with the enormous delays that we have seen, would be irrational and dangerous to the very people that you spend so much time serving and caring about.

And we will make sure that that message gets out to our subcommittee members.

I have some specific questions for all of you. Mr. Walcott, can you give me some idea of the children that your agency serves? Do they come to foster care as teens having had a history of foster care, or is this something new to them?

Mr. WALCOTT. We have a variety of populations that we provide services to. Some come to the agency with a history of foster care; some are new admissions into the system altogether.

What we are seeing now in New York City and possibly throughout New York State are more severely emotionally damaged children coming into the system at all ages, children who are both physically as well as sexually abused, children who have very basic needs to survive in today's society.

So what we have done is to develop our independent living program to provide services to them, tutorial services, basic educational services, group program.

This past Tuesday we had a career night for all of our adolescents in independent living where we exposed them to people with various careers, including our new chancellor, Dr. Richard Green. And this gives them an incentive to do better, to work with the realities that they have to face in today's world.

We also hold monthly workshops with our adolescents around basic check writing, how to find an apartment, and other basic survival issues.

So we are seeing a wide range of children coming in to our agency.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Tell me about what success if any you have had with other State agencies giving these foster children an opportunity for having a priority for job training or placement?

Mr. WALCOTT. With other State agencies? Well, my contact has been limited as far as other State agencies. What we have done within the State, especially within the city, had very successful contact with various city agencies and the placement of the youth for jobs.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. So the city agencies that you deal with——

Mr. WALCOTT. Exactly.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY [continuing]. They treat these children as a priority.

Mr. WALCOTT. They do. Special services for children, and the New York State Department of Social Services has definitely treated these children as a priority, and we feel it is important for more emphasis to be placed on these children. Because what has happened in New York, a lot of press attention has been placed on the border babies who have been coming into the foster care system.

And we feel enough attention has to be placed also on the older children who will be leaving foster care as well.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Sabol, apparently 2 years ago New York City had a court order saying that the city had to extend the services to children aged 21.

How many kids were affected by that order, do you know offhand?

Ms. SABOL. I do not know how many children were affected by that order. But I think one of the things that I would point out is, and I think my colleagues on the panel have supported it as well, as we look at transition from foster care to independent living, we need to look at it through age 21.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Do all the panelists agree with that?

Mr. COLON. I would just like to raise some concerns. Because we have some concerns with raising it to the age of 21.

If it is to provide services to the children up to the age of 21, we do not have any major problems with that. I do think that these youth, even after the age of 19, need some services. There has to be some transition up to 6 months, 12 months, or as long as they are in school; working part time; because there are still a lot of significant problems that these children, youth still have, they do need continued assistance, especially in the area of medical care.

Just because they're working at Burger King or somewhere else on minimum wage, they might need continued assistance with medical care, because of the severity of the problems that they have had during placement.

Our concern though is the foster care payment impact that it would have in the State of California, if we are going to say that all children up to the age of 21 then would be receiving a foster care payment.

In our State because of proposition 13—and I'm sure it's not a problem maybe in some other States—our general fund expenditure for our youth, we would have to look at not only the 5,000 that are IV-E eligible, but we would have to look at the other 10,000; and the State picks up 95 percent of those costs.

And so that is just an area of concern that we do have in raising that ceiling up to 21. It is in the foster care payment area, not that independent living services should not continue.

Ms. SABOL. And I think when I talk about raising the level, I am not mandating it for every child. It would be based on a case plan, it would be based on the child wanting to participate after age 18.

But I also believe very strongly that for those children for whom it is appropriate, you build an incentive, so indeed you can end up with this independent adult.

Mr. COLON. I just wanted to restate our expressed concerns.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Mr. Colon, let me—you discussed I think in your testimony something about California didn't receive the grant for foster care independent living program until November of 1987?

Mr. COLON. Well, what happened was, we got notified late in June. We weren't notified early enough so it wasn't in our budget commencing July 1.

So our own process internally in the State to have it in the State budget so I could turn around and give it to the counties took us all the way to November.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Right, now you have got to spend it all by September of 1988; is that correct?

Mr. COLON. That is correct.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. If we change the law and allow you to use 1987 funds through 1989, will that help you?

Mr. COLON. Yes. If we could use any amount of that portion—somebody has suggested December 31, 1988, for us to be able to use some of these moneys.

If you are going to make any exceptions, you should just continue it on forward until we spend the money.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Now, are the counties in your State actually purchasing vocational training for older foster care youth, or are they just referring them to training programs?

Mr. COLON. No, what the local counties are doing is working with local agencies to develop these, specially the community colleges, and job corps and others.

What we did not want to do is duplicate services. If there was something already available in that area we did not want duplication, because the State serves children in urban areas which are more sophisticated all the way to Modoc County where it is really rural and very limited resources.

So depending on the resources that are there, then the counties can contract out with a local community college to develop additional resources as needed for the youth.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Tell me more about this program. You spent some of the money we gave you, I think you referred to in your testimony, to train foster parents to prepare the kids.

Mr. COLON. Correct.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Tell me how that works.

Mr. COLON. Well, what we did was, we entered with a contract with the community college system. We've already had an agreement in which the State has set aside a million dollars every year to train foster parents in our State.

So what we did was, we gave them the additional moneys, through that same system, to train foster parents on the skills needed in regards to some of the resources, and some of the skills needed handling youth, especially the ones who are 16 and over, who can really be a problem, in some of the skills that they need as a foster parent to help and facilitate the youth in getting out and knowing what resources are out there available for their youth in their specific home.

Same thing with group home providers.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. What is the foster parents' reaction to this? Do they have to be prodded into going? Or are they by nature people who are interested in going and learning what else they can do for their foster kids?

Mr. COLON. Well, it is just like so many other things. Usually the best foster parents always go to the training, and those that could use it sometimes don't show up.

But what we try to do is give them incentives to come to the training, facilitate it, like finding the easiest hours that we can enhance their attendance. And the foster parents actually are part of the group in each of the community colleges to help develop the curriculum and really make it focused.

And the same thing with the group home providers. So that there is already built in buy-in from the different groups in the community that this is needed, and that the curriculum is something that they asked for, and it's developed with them jointly.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. It's an interesting idea.

Mr. COLON. I had one more point, though, that I did want to make concerning the commissioner's statement about social services block grant money available to the States, and IV-B monies available to the States.

That has not, as you had pointed out previously, had any dramatic increases at all.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. That is nonsense.

Mr. COLON. Approximately the facts are, in the State of California, we receive approximately $300 million. We have had to increase our State funds, because our social services block grant is both for children and adults, in our adult services and our in-home supportive services program alone, we are spending over $600 million.

In our child welfare services, we are spending approximately $400 million. So you can see it does not come even close to the commitments that the State of California has made for the resources that we need to putting to meet the needs of both adults and children.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Title XX has not been one of the big priorities with this administration, I think that is fair to say.

Ms. SABOL. I think we can all underscore the same experience in terms of the State and local.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Hiller, the administration mentioned that there was an 1986 demonstration grant to the State of Minnesota for the purpose of developing a model program for foster care youth.

Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Ms. HILLER. Yes. That was a program in which we had chosen three rural counties, one in northern Minnesota, one that was very close to the metropolitan area in central Minnesota, and a southern county.

That program was not limited to title IV-E youth. That program recruited and screened 16 adolescents in that county, and they did a group model, which met once a week for approximately 3 or 4 hours per week to discuss issues of adolescence.

Youth also had a summer job as a part of the program, and they also learned banking, saving, and appropriate spending of money.

The group covered many different types of units. In all three counties the youth were matched with mentors. During group meetings, clients would discuss, for example, buying a car. Then the "assignment" due for the next group meeting was to go with their mentors and find three cars they could buy for, say $1,000. Would they want to buy any of these cars? How long would they need to save for the car? And how much would it cost per month to own the car?

One group actually had the experience of having a "child" around 24 hours per day. They were given 5-pound flour sacks, which became their flour child. They had to carry this around just

as if it were a baby for one week and come back and explain how they liked it.

One girl stated very clearly: I thought I wanted to have a baby so I could stay home and be a mom, but I guess right now that is the last thing I want.

At the end of the experience, all the youth in the group didn't like their flour children, they didn't want to see the flour anymore. As a closure experience, they were asked to go use the flour to bake a cake or cookies for the next group meeting.

Those groups stressed learning, through hands-on experiences. In two of the projects, this was coupled with the 3 or 4 day wilderness experience which the group leaders seemed to feel brought out a lot of issues of everyday taking care for themselves that the youth wouldn't normally have experienced just being with each other three hours once a week.

There is a manual that has been developed as a part of this project. It is currently at the printers, and will be available through our State document center for any States, counties, or other agencies that are interested in it.

We had JTPA support. We had community colleges that were opening up their facilities for the groups to meet in the community colleges and do vocational testing and tours of the facilities. Local businesses sponsored the projects.

The county coordinators were doing this on a shoestring budget and pulled in every resource that they could. And they found that in the counties, as long as it was with adolescents, it seemed like everyone was opening up their doors.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. You know, that sounds terrific. Children do learn that 5 pounds of flour is different than babies at some point.

Do you see the model program as something you want to expand in the State of Minnesota?

Ms. HILLER. That is one approach. We do not feel there is one model to reach every adolescent.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. It seems that it would be hard to apply that in Los Angeles or New York. I can see a lot of flour. But I can see that a different approach might be necessary for rural Minnesota as opposed to Minneapolis.

Ms. HILLER. We are a State advised, county administered system. Some of the counties picked up on this model. I would estimate that six or seven counties, including a couple of the metropolitan counties, are doing similar programs.

There are other counties, of course, that are using other approaches. It all depends on the ages of the clients, and the number of adolescents the counties have.

It is a good model. But there are also other things that we are trying to do.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Do you all get together—I think I noticed in the administration's testimony, they had some conference they talked about it.

Do you all exchange ideas about what type of programs are underway in different States? Is that done routinely?

Mr. COLON. Not as much as it should be.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Did all of you know about the Minnesota project before she just mentioned it?

Mr. COLON. Not that particular model.

Ms. SABOL. No.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Lessard, you indicated that you were a case manager for awhile.

What's the biggest caseload you can handle and manage to provide the sort of services and help to the children that might make a difference?

Ms. LESSARD. Are you speaking of a caseload?

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Caseload.

Ms. LESSARD. How many?

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. I mean how many kids can you take care of?

Ms. LESSARD. I think that a good number would be 20, 20 cases per worker because at this point you're not just running around, putting out fires. You have the time and energy to spend looking for resources, counseling with these kids, seeing them more than once a month, like some case workers who have generic caseloads, and just being able to basically pull all the services together and provide a real adequate plan for the youth.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Twenty.

Ms. LESSARD. Twenty.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Can I get the feeling from the other panelists? Is that a reasonable caseload?

Mr. WALCOTT. It's a reasonable caseload. And what we have at our agency is a specific person who is responsible for the independent living program. So that individual works in conjunction with the social worker to maintain a caseload on average of 20 people, and develop a specific plan for the families for those adolescents.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Lessard again, you have an independent living subsidy for all the kids enrolled in the program?

Ms. LESSARD. No. The subsidy program is an option.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. I see. How much do you pay them?

Ms. LESSARD. $545 a month is the maximum. It depends. If they're working, then we'll include their income on their budget when we make our budget up.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Mrs. Kennelly.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I don't have many questions because you all agreed more or less on what is happening and what should be done.

I did notice though one of the requirements that if one of the discharged youths have housing for a period of time, and then they lose that housing, it is necessary to put them back into foster care. And, of course, this reduces the number of children that can be included in the program.

Is this realistic? If the child is, say, 17, 18, has gone into this independent living situation for awhile, and is living independently, but then loses that particular housing, he or she can go back. Should we allow the individual to go back into the home situation or should we let you concentrate more on cases that need attention to new beginnings?

Ms. SABOL. I think it is realistic, and I think we owe it to the child. If we are helping a child to become independent, if they go

out and, for whatever reason, they fail, they lose their housing, then we have the obligation, particularly a 17-year-old, of going back in and making sure we are providing those services, moving them back out again, supporting them again. And that's one of the reasons we're advocating for ensuring that the age is up through 21.

But we are still talking about children, youngsters, immature. It's like our own children sometimes leave home—and I've had the experience—they've had to come back. And then they go back out again. And so we shouldn't foster children of that same opportunity.

I think your point is exactly right. It may place stress on the system, but we have to adjust the system to accommodate that, not punish the child for things that they do.

Mrs. KENNELLY. We've heard about situations in States where some of the children that are eligible in this program are young women, who then become pregnant and have children, they then become eligible for AFDC. So they're really eligible due to their own situation and don't have to look back at the finances of the parent.

Is this becoming common? Does this cause any disruption in the program, and how do you deal with it?

Ms. SABOL. Well, I'll try to phrase it this way. Yes, there are some children who leave foster care who become pregnant and become eligible for public assistance.

Well, one of the goals that we're trying to accomplish with this program is to begin at age 14 preparing the children to be independent, to not be dependent on public assistance or some of the model programs that you've had described here.

So what we're hoping to do is to minimize that very possibility that you're describing. But again it does happen. But these programs are geared to minimize that possibility.

Mrs. KENNELLY. I'm interested to know whether all of you on this panel work directly in this type of program or whether you are general social service workers within your States, dealing with all range of ages in children.

Ms. SABOL. I am the executive deputy commissioner for the department of social services, so we have the range of social service programs.

Mr. WALCOTT. I am executive director of the direct service agency, but we have a variety of agents that provide assistance.

Mrs. KENNELLY. So you're dealing with the whole spectrum of social services. I thought so.

Just being the devil's advocate, when you're doing your work, and when you're with your peers, is there any expression of concern?

The whole world is aware now that one out of every four children are born into poverty, that we've got a serious situation since a large number of our children will live inadequate lives and have bleak futures.

Is there any concern expressed to you that with the dollars so short and so many children in need, that to allocate money for individuals, 18, 19, 20, and 21 years of age is not the most efficient use of the money.

Is there any common concern that maybe these dollars should be better spent when the child is younger than in this program? Of course, this is the wrong group to ask.

But do you hear it? Because we're going to hear it from our constituents. I just wondered how you deal with that.

Ms. SABOL. The way I deal with it is there is not an either/or. We have to make both ends of the system. We have to do everything on the early age to prevent, but you also have to understand when we're investing in the 18, 19, 20 year old, we're investing in future parents who are going to have children. So we want to give them the best start possible out there in that world so that when they become parents, they will be able to do the kinds of things for young children that will prevent the children from going into foster care and getting exposed to some of the kinds of things that you've heard people describe here.

So I would hope we wouldn't have to couch it at either/or, that children deserve our best——

Mrs. KENNELLY. Of course, I knew all along 18 to 21 is not a child any longer.

Mr. COLON. That's true. That's true.

Mrs. KENNELLY. I'm just being the devil's advocate. We are going to hear these arguments. I'm with you, that's why I'm here today.

Mr. COLON. That's true, but I think what you have to point out is that these children, 16 and older, aren't in there just because they just entered the system. It's that the system overall has a responsibility because they are our kids, they've been in there maybe for 10 or 12 years. And it isn't like all of a sudden they came out at the age of 16 of 17.

Usually those don't even enter our system because they're a runaway, they're in some home somewhere, they're not dependents of the local court. Therefore, they do not even enter the child welfare system overall. So that they enter a different system, maybe probation, maybe they break a law somewhere.

But, at least in our State, they don't enter into a dependency type of thing, where it's a child abuse and neglect type of situation.

So that these children that we're serving, the bulk of them have been in the system. They are our children, and we have a responsibility, I think, to help them make that transition to be adults who will contribute overall to the society and be a taxpayer in the future.

Ms. HILLER. In addition, I think we have to look not only at the age of the youth for whom we're providing services, but also the type of services we are providing.

Minnesota is looking at one model that we're hoping we can implement in a few years, once the youth with whom we're now working get older. We would not place these people in foster care homes. These people will be in transitional apartments, supervised apartment living, support systems with much lower costs.

There would be a tapering off of support and cost that would result as the child leaves, as she or he feels ready, using fewer and fewer services as she or he gets older and older.

Yes, we will have a couple of cases where a child will need more intense supervision, living in a foster parents home until they're 20. At the same time, we'll have 18-year-olds say: "Thank you very

much, we've had a good time, I'll come back for dinner, or if I need—you know, if I need to talk over a problem."

Mrs. KENNELLY. That's what I'm trying to get at.

Ms. HILLER. There is a transitional process. The intensity of services, preparing the youth, teaching them when they're 15, 14 on up to the point they're 18, and then opening the doors but not necessarily shoving them out so that they make a transition—such as move to a transitional apartment, move to supervised apartments.

I guess we don't see youth between ages 18 and 21 as cost-intensive as it would be for the 14 to 18 year olds

Mrs. KENNELLY. I'd like to ask Mr. Walcott a question.

I wasn't exactly clear when you were talking about the client, the child or the young person that you take care of in your program that is battered or abused when they enter the program.

Does that child come from a foster home or has that child been in the street and then comes to you.

Mr. WALCOTT. Basically the child that I was referring to may come from the biological family or an extended family member into the foster care system itself. We very rarely see children who will come directly from the street. It will be a placement as a result of sexual or physical abuse. And then they come through the system that's held to our agency.

Mrs. KENNELLY. I just happen to have an article that I was reading for a whole another reason about the number of children—this just happens to be New York—that are in the streets, living in the streets, involved in prostitution, drugs, et cetera, from, say, 13 to 16. And it is mind-boggling that we have this situation. It's a shame we can't put some of our resources together for all these kids.

Mr. WALCOTT. I agree.

In Ms. Sabol's testimony, she talked about the lowering of the age to 16, and she talked about 14. With out independent living program, we stress, and make it mandated for the children to be 12 years of age.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Oh, I'm not stressing independent. I was saying there are those children, and we know they're there right this minute out in the streets. They've been up all night, and they're sleeping right now, but we can't get into this program.

I'm for putting more of those street children into the foster care program. I'm not for putting your children into independent living.

Mr. WALCOTT. No, no. The reason I was mentioning that, so we can then prepare, going back to your earlier point, these children for eventual discharge from foster care at 18 years of age so then we will not have to deal with the population of 18 to 21.

So it's important to identify them as young as possible so we can work with them.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Walcott, that's what I'm trying to get at. You know, I'm wrestling with this entire situation. Sometimes we piecemeal things and we've got a much bigger problem that you all know about.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. Ms. Hiller, one point. You mentioned that the greater level of services was from ages 14 to 18 as opposed from 18 to 21.

Why wouldn't it be more the responsibility of the foster parent for children between the ages of 14 and 18 to provide the sort of nurturing services needed?

Ms. HILLER. The foster parents do play a large role, and that's part of what we're trying to encourage with our foster parent training. We are trying to give our foster parents the skills necessary in dealing, not only with the issues of adolescence, but also with issues of youth who may still be working through birth mother/birth father relationships, wanting to return home, or wanting to not be a foster child.

There are other programs, though.

I'm not sure how many of you have raised adolescents, but driver's education and the cost of after-school activity can nickel and dime a budget.

Mrs. KENNELLY. I already know and he doesn't yet. [Laughter.]

Ms. HILLER. But it's that type of expenses. For example, one of our youth is using her SELF money to apply to colleges, also there's a small stipend so that the girl can actually go with one of her foster parents and tour the Minnesota college campuses. The colleges are spread out, and it happens to be something that the family can't quite afford to provide for their foster child on what they're making.

So, with this kind of funding we can give those kids the same chance that kids who are in natural families have.

Ms. LESSARD. There are some comments I wanted to make in reference to supporting why these services are important is, No. 1, we're breaking the cycle, the cycle of abuse, the cycle of poverty. If you can get to these kids and get them the services, I think that's the underlying thing we're trying to do, is to make these kids successful in society and break that cycle.

And also I think to provide the services to the foster parents also is very important because they're the ones that live with the kids on a day-to-day basis, and they're the ones, like you say, that get nickeled and dimed to death. And they're the ones that can teach them how to budget and how to handle that.

Acting Chairman DOWNEY. I thank the panel. Your testimony was very useful. Thank you.

The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:14 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

[Submissions for the record follow:]

TESTIMONY OF

JOHN F. WHITE, JR.

SECRETARY

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

ON BEHALF OF

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION

AND

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE HUMAN SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee. My name is John White and I am Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. I am also Chairman of the Social Services Committee of the American Public Welfare Association's National Council of State Human Service Administrators. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Council.

As you know, the National Council of State Human Service Administrators is composed of those officials in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories, charged with the responsibility of administering publicly funded human services, including the child welfare, foster care, independent living, and adoption assistance programs. In the past, the Council has worked closely with the Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee in developing sound and forward-looking human services legislation, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you today on behalf of teenagers in foster care.

Let me begin by stating unequivocally that APWA and the National Council of State Human Service Administrators strongly support the Title IV-E Independent Living Program. We have been supportive of the program since it was first introduced in Congress in June, 1985, by Representatives Stark, Ford (TN), Matsui, and Kennelly. The Council testified to this effect before the Public Assistance Subcommittee on September 19, 1985, regarding H.R. 2810. We were also involved and supportive of the provision when in was enacted in P.L. 99-272 in 1986.

Background

As you well know, Mr. Chairman, a number of studies from New York City in 1984 documented the need for greater attention to the needs of older adolescents in foster care. Various researchers and journalists found that young people entering homeless and runaway youth shelters in New York City had previously lived in foster care settings. Former foster children were also found in disproportionate numbers on public assistance rolls, as well.

A study funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and released in 1986 also documented the need to provide independent living services to adolescents. The study found that very few youths have any experience or practice in living independently, and many lacked high school diplomas and basic living skills.

According to APWA's Voluntary Cooperative Information System, about 40 percent of the children entering foster care each year are adolescents (13 and older), and 45 to 50 percent of the children in foster care on any given day are in their teen years. These youths are much more likely than younger children in foster care to be involved with the legal system, or to be members of families with serious, long-standing problems. These situations may prove so difficult to resolve that the youths may never be able to rejoin their families.

However, because most teens have knowledge of--and some contact with--their biological families, it frequently is not practical to sever familial bonds and parental rights in order to pursue adoptive families for them. Data from the Voluntary Cooperative Information System show that only about 11 percent of children adopted in FY 85 (who were formerly foster children) were adolescents.

Thus, in the cases where neither "reunification" with the youngster's family nor adoption by a substitute permanent family is an option, other arrangements must be made. Although many foster parents are willing to try, traditional foster home settings are often ill-equipped to respond to the needs of troubled young people nearing adulthood. Other types of living arrangements exist, such as group homes and residential treatment centers, but these facilities may be more restrictive than the youngster's problems require.

Before enactment of the Title IV-E Independent Living Program, young people in foster care would reach the age of majority, or because of problems in the placement they would be emancipated earlier, and find themselves with few supports or resources, and with very few self-sufficiency skills. As the surrogate parents of these young adults, states needed resources to help them make a successful transition to independence.

Enactment of the Independent Living Program in P.L. 99-272 was an important step forward in assisting teens in foster care to become self-sufficient. The new program entitled states to a share of $45 million for each of fiscal years 1987 and 1988 to establish and operate programs which would help Title IV-E- 16 and 17-year-olds develop independent living skills.

The law allowed states to develop programs which would:

- enable participants to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent or to take part in appropriate vocational training,
- provide training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning,
- provide for individual and group counseling,
- integrate and coordinate services otherwise available to participants,
- provide for the establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program,
- develop with each participant a written plan for making the transition to independent living,
- provide participants with other services and assistance designed to improve their transition to independent living.

The funds available under the new program cannot be used for activities or services funded under other provisions of Title IV-E, such as staff training.

Implementation

The law required HHS to issue regulations by early June, 1986, so that states could begin designing programs for implementation on October 1, 1986. HHS never issued regulations and only informed states of the existence of the program in February, 1987. Although HHS said they would continue to oppose implementation of the program, they asked states to submit plans by May 11, 1987. All states and the District of Columbia submitted their plans on schedule.

HHS did not actually release funds to states until the fourth quarter of fiscal year 1987. Since the federal funds represented the first opportunity in most states to do special independent living programming for adolescents, the initial months were spent hiring and training administrative and casework staff, developing policy, identifying private service contractors, and other "start-up" activities. Thus, many states have only recently developed the capacity to provide services to teens and distribute funds to counties and private agencies. Other states have been operating their programs just long enough to begin generating data about the positive effects of the program on adolescents.

States are spending the funds provided under the Title IV-E Independent Living Program in a variety of ways. Many states are using the funds to hire staff or make staffing changes. About half of the states have hired independent living coordinators, and many are establishing special "units" of caseworkers who carry caseloads consisting only of adolescents.

States are using funds to identify and study the changes which must be made to make the foster care system more responsive to teens. Most states are either doing a comprehensive assessment of the foster care program and identifying necessary systemic changes, or they are assessing each teen already in foster care to establish individual case plans.

Most states are using the funds to train staff, foster parents, private agency staff, and other volunteers. Training for staff often focuses on assessment skills, how to assist youths develop decision-making and other skills necessary for independent living, and how to link youths to community support systems, such as volunteer mentors. Training for foster parents is designed to help them develop skills in teaching youths how to perform daily living activities, such as personal banking and budgeting, food selection and preparation, health and hygiene, and accessing community resources.

In addition to the training foster parents can provide youths, special training programs are being established in many states for groups of foster care teens. These programs typically address education (helping the youth to obtain a high school diploma or GED, vocational training, or college entrance), housing concerns, consumer and health care education.

Finally, states are using some of the federal funds to develop an evaluation component for the Independent Living Program. The law requires states to report on (1) the number of youths served and the demographic characteristics of these youths, and (2) the status of the youths 90 days after completion of the program. APWA has developed guidelines for evaluating state independent living programs, including specific recommendations regarding data on clients, services delivered, outcomes achieved, and funds expended.

Recommendations

State administrators believe enactment of the Title IV-E Independent Living Program was an important first step in providing appropriate services to teenagers in foster care. Yet,

even though the program created a new set of badly needed services, it did not allow eligibility for all teens in foster care, constraining the program from being as effective as it could be. Further, it did not allow the new funds to be used for certain activities which have been identified as critical links in assuring that youths have developed the requisite skills for achieving and maintaining independence.

Some of these concerns are addressed in Title I of H.R. 2753, the Child Welfare and Foster Care Amendments of 1987, introduced by Rep. Matsui in June, 1987. Rep. Matsui's bill allows states the option of extending the independent living program to eligible foster children to the age of 21 if a written transitional independent living plan has been or is being developed. It also extends the program to teens in foster care who are not Title IV-E eligible.

Administrators believe that the requirement to cut off services to youths at 17 years of age is a barrier to effectively promoting independence among young adults in foster care. Youths growing up in their biological families are frequently provided guidance, support and assistance with finances well into their twenties. Foster care youth, who have had much less stable family living arrangements than others their age, are likely to need more, not less, assistance than these other young adults. Rep. Matsui's bill would rectify this situation in the current Independent Living Program. APWA recommends adopting Section 101 of H.R. 2753.

The existing independent living program limits eligibility to Title IV-E-eligible youth only. To be eligible for Title IV-, a youth's family must have been receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) at the time the youth was placed in foster care, or if the family was not receiving AFDC, they had to have been eligible at the time of placement had they applied. Limiting the Independent Living Program to youths whose families are AFDC and Title IV-E-eligible prohibits states from providing services to a large number of youths in foster care. In Illinois, for example, only about 20 percent of the 3,000 youths age 16 and 17 in foster care are Title IV-E-eligible. For teens in need of services and information about living independently, the distinction about eligibility for Title IV-E seems inequitable. APWA recommends enactment of Section 102 of H.R. 2753, which would allow more equitable treatment of young people in foster care.

Section 103 of H.R. 2753 changed the dates of the required reports from states to HHS, and from HHS to the Congress, to take into account the delay in implementation of the program. Although some of those dates have already passed, state administrators are supportive of this provision in H.R. 2753 because the impact of the program cannot be evaluated until the program has been in operation for a longer period of time.

Finally, APWA recommends that more flexibility be afforded in the use of independent living funds so that reimbursement could be provided for specialized placements and direct subsidies could be paid to youths in supervised independent living placements. This would allow youths the opportunity to practice their independent living skills under the supervision of professionals and mentors so that they would "graduate" from foster care with some direct experience and transition time between their dependence on the foster care system and their new independence.

Summary

I would like to close by reiterating the very strong support of APWA and state human service administrators for the Title IV-E Independent Living Program. Although not much data is available yet, the need for the program is apparent and preliminary data indicate very positive outcomes for the youth involved. We urge you to extend the authorization of the Independent Living Program so it can more fully demonstrate its potential for helping young adults with troubled backgrounds become productive, contributing members of society.

At the same time, we also urge amending current law to allow eligibility for youths up to age 21, and to eliminate the Title IV-E eligibility requirement. We also believe more flexibility is necessary in allowable expenditures so that direct subsidies can be made to youth and independent living placements can be subsidized.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. We look forward to working with you to extend and expand the Independent Living Program.

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STATEMENT OF

THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) appreciates the opportunity to submit a written statement for the record in support of the extension of authority for the federal initiative designed to support youths in foster care who are preparing for the transition to independent living. CDF is a privately-supported public charity that for nearly 15 years has sought to serve as an advocate for poor children and their families. CDF's goal is to educate the nation about the needs of poor children and to encourage preventive investments which will protect and promote their full and healthy development. CDF's work spans a broad range of public policy issues, including family income, health care, education, youth employment, child care, and specialized services that are essential to the well-being of the next generation and to the future of the nation.

The Children's Defense Fund has had a longstanding interest in and commitment to addressing the problems facing children and adolescents at risk of placement and living in out-of-home care. Most recently, as part of our ongoing child welfare work and our adolescent pregnancy prevention initiative, we took a look at the special needs of teens in foster care and efforts that can be taken on their behalf to help them achieve future self-sufficiency. The September 1987 Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse Report, Teens in Foster Care: Preventing Pregnancy and Building Self-Sufficiency, a copy of which is attached to this statement, reports on that study and describes the results of a survey regarding teens in foster care that we conducted in 1986 with the American Public Welfare Association. We wanted to learn about steps being taken by state child welfare agencies to help build the self-confidence and self-esteem of teens in care, address academic deficiencies, expand teens' involvement in the community, and promote their ability to make the transition to independent living. The scattered state efforts identified in that survey to help youths in foster care move toward independence and self-sufficiency were given a major boost when Congress enacted the federal Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative as part of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985. CDF staff later reviewed the applications submitted by all states and the District of Columbia for FY 1987 independent living funds under the IV-E Initiative and were impressed by the range of system improvements, programmatic activities, training and community outreach planned by the states.

CDF supports a two year extension of the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative and urges you to expand eligibility for independent living services to a larger proportion of the vulnerable teens in care under state supervision. As background, before discussing our specific recommendations for the Independent Living Initiative we would like to do two things. First, we will describe briefly some of the special needs of adolescents in foster care that make them an especially "at risk" population of young people and justify a more intensive investment on their behalf. Second, we will describe briefly some of the specific activities states are undertaking with the IV-E Independent Living funds.

Special Needs of Teens in Foster Care

Looking at the educational performance, health status, employment readiness, social responsibility and awareness, and personal growth of teens in foster care, it is clear that many are "at risk" and in need of special initiatives on their behalf if they are to live full lives and attain eventual self-sufficiency. Without efforts to assist them in their transition to independence, the abrupt termination from care, often at age 18, and the sudden shift from dependency on a public service system to virtually total independence, can be a shocking event. In 1985, approximately 50 percent of the youths over 16 leaving foster care in Arizona were being fully discharged to live on their own, where they were responsible for their own financial

support, medical care, housing, and other tasks associated with independent living. Other states report similar patterns. Unlike other adolescents, foster care youth often have no one to turn to when crises arise.

Educational Deficits

The educational deficits of youths in foster care will clearly jeopardize their futures if remedial help and more attention to their unmet needs is not forthcoming.

- Two longitudinal studies of foster care youths, one done in New York City by Trudy Festinger of the New York University School of Social Work and the other in New Orleans by Rosalie Zimmerman of the Tulane University School of Social Work, showed youths in care as having significant problems in school at the time of discharge. Many were below the age-appropriate grade level and they were less likely than the general population to have completed high school or obtained an equivalency degree.

- Secondary analyses of national foster care data collected in 1977 indicate that only one-third of 17-year-old foster children were in the twelfth grade, compared to 70 percent of all 17-year-olds.

- Only 28 percent of the 257 adolescents surveyed in four states by Westat, Inc., had completed high school or gotten a GED at the time of discharge from foster care. The study also found that those with jobs had completed more education.

Poor Health

The vulnerability of many foster children also is demonstrated by their relatively poor health status and often limited access to appropriate health care. Studies have shown foster children to be in poorer health and more likely to suffer from chronic medical conditions. High rates of emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems also have been documented.

- A 1986 study by Roger White of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, on the health status and health services utilization of 417 foster care children in Baltimore, Maryland, found that nearly half of the 10- to 14-year-olds and 35 percent of the total group of children just entering care were rated low in health status. Those in care at least 18 months also reported numerous health problems.

- In a 1985 California study, prepared by Neal Halfon and Linnea Klee for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, social workers, foster parents, and health care providers responding generally reported that the health status of foster children at placement ranged from fair to poor. The study also reported that acute and chronic mental health problems, more prevalent among teens in care, were rarely addressed.

Identity Crises and Low Self-Esteem

In some instances, the physical, emotional, and educational problems experienced by foster children -- both males and females -- may result from or be compounded by previous histories of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect. Approximately 60 percent of the children and adolescents who are removed from their families and placed in foster care each year have been abused or neglected in some manner. Over the past five or six years, public agencies also have seen increased numbers of reports of child sexual abuse. Reports rose from 35,000 in 1981 to 100,000 in 1984, in part due to expanded public awareness and

training of child welfare staffs. Research indicates that sexually acting out and low self-esteem may be symptomatic of previous sexual abuse.

For any youths to mature emotionally and socially and to function successfully as adults, they must develop as an integral part of themselves a firm sense of identity, strong self-esteem and self-confidence, and the ability to form trusting relationships. Teens in foster care may have had little help dealing with issues of separation earlier in their lives. Their own parents' inabilities to cope successfully with a range of problems may make it impossible for them to see any strengths in their own capacities. It may be necessary for them to review and resolve issues from their pasts before they can begin to plan for the future.

Low esteem, which often contributes to and is compounded by problems in education, health, and other areas, is common among youths in foster care. In a system historically designed to protect dependent children, youths often get few opportunities to excel individually and to gain a sense of personal worth. Opportunities for them to make decisions and to assert their views are rare. Too frequently, no one asks whether they are ready to move again, or prefer a particular placement. Youths in institutional setting often have even fewer choices to make -- on a daily basis or for the long term. Yet without a sense of self-worth they will not have the confidence they need to make it on their own. Nor will they be able to form trusting relationships with adults, their peers, or their own children.

Transitional Problems

Teens who have been in foster care, sometimes for much of their minority, understandably often find the transition to being on their own extremely difficult. In many states youths generally are discharged from care at 18. Eighteen is the age of majority, and in many ways all 18-year-olds are expected to begin the transition to adulthood. In many other ways, however, 18-year-olds often are not ready to be wholly independent and normally get much familial support. Many 18-year-olds still are finishing high school. Others who already have graduated may be getting financial help for college or other continuing education. Some may continue to live at home while earning low wages. But teens in foster care generally don't get this support, unless their foster parents keep them longer on an informal basis, or a state extends its commitment while they continue in school.

Too frequently foster care youths have not been adequately prepared for being on their own.

- More than half of the respondents in Festinger's longitudinal study, for example, cited the need for opportunities for further training or schooling, job preparation and career planning, help in obtaining housing, medical coverage, and family planning. These adults who had been in foster care repeatedly stressed the need for "making a child aware of alternatives." Nearly 80 percent of the study participants reported that foster children "worry a lot" about their futures.

- In a study of Connecticut youths in long-term foster care by Connecticut's Child and Family Services agency, only one-third of the foster parents felt that the teens in their care were prepared to leave care.

- A court in New York State ruled in 1985 that the state and New York City child welfare agencies had failed to do appropriate planning for teens before discharging them from care. The lawsuit, Palmer v. Cuomo, Index No. 2307/85 (Sup. Ct. N.Y. Co. 1985) aff'd 503 N.Y.S. 2d 20 (1st Dep't 1986), was brought on behalf of a

group of homeless people younger than 21 who were discharged from foster care to the streets.

This lack of preparation compounds other problems that teens experience while in care and as a result too many end up the responsibility of other systems.

- Both Zimmerman and Festinger in New Orleans and New York found a slightly higher rate of public assistance use among their sample populations than among the general public. This finding was corroborated by a later New York City Human Resources Administration study which reported that 24 percent of the persons between 18 and 21 discharged from foster care to their own responsibility between June 1979 and June 1980 were on public assistance by September 1980, as contrasted with 11.9 percent of all youths in the city in that age group.

- Former foster care teens also have been found in high proportions among homeless populations. The preliminary results of a study in progress by researchers at the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin indicate that 26.2 percent of the cross-section sample of the homeless population of all ages studied in Minneapolis had been in foster care, where their average number of placements had been 5.9. A study of occupants of selected homeless shelters in New York City reported that as many as half had a history of foster care placements.

Implementation of Independent Living Activities

The IV-E Independent Living Initiative was intended to provide a broad range of services and activities designed to address many of the special needs of adolescents in foster care. Congress recognized that without additional help too many of the young people in foster care would grow up without the physical and emotional health, educational background, and self-confidence they need to become self-sufficient adults. Rather they would too likely continue to be dependent on various other public systems as adults.

Independent living services for teens in foster care should encompass more than an isolated or short-term program for the older teen about to leave care. Independent living should be as much an approach to providing care as it is a set of services. In the broadest sense, it is an attitude that from an early age fosters self-esteem, independent thinking, good interpersonal skills, and basic problem-solving abilities. It enables youths to move gradually, with adequate supports, from dependence to independence.

This process of helping a child become an independent adult embodies a continuum of services that includes: informal efforts to encourage within the foster care system the attitude and philosophy of fostering independent living; formal training programs for teens in daily living and life-planning skills; a range of transitional living arrangements that provides young people greater independence than traditional foster care; and a variety of aftercare services. However, if youth are to benefit from the continuum, all the pieces must be in place and systemic changes must promote preparation of independence as a priority for the youths in care.

The IV-E Independent Living Initiative is helping states to make such systemic changes. For example, the IV-E Initiative has enabled more than half the states to begin their first state-level activity in the area of independent living. Virtually every state is using the funds in part to develop new policies or programmatic activities designed to help youths 16 and over move toward independent living. Two-thirds will also train staff and

foster parents and other caretakers to understand the developmental needs of teens in care and their own roles in assisting teens to make the transition to independent living. In addition to strengthening the capacity of the system to more appropriately meet the needs of teens in care, new services or activities are being established to teach daily living skills to teens, provide specific education, vocational training and employment activities, and provide emotional support to teens as they prepare for discharge. A smaller number of states are also focusing on the need for transitional services for multi-problem youths in care, often those with special emotional problems, and for pregnant and parenting teens.

You have heard from individual states and from national organizations with state agencies as members about specific independent living activities underway in the states. Therefore, we will summarize only briefly our information on activities planned by the states with the IV-E Independent Living funds.

Policy and Programmatic Improvements

- About a quarter of the states will begin with an assessment of their independent living needs and resources, and some will establish independent living policies and embark on community outreach efforts on behalf of teens in care.
- Half will hire independent living coordinators or consultants to oversee implementation of independent living activities and to assure that teens are assessed and get independent living plans.
- About half are also taking steps to improve interagency coordination at both the state and local level.
- Nine states propose to isolate adolescent caseloads or otherwise assign workers to assist teens with independent living activities.
- Over two-thirds of the states are conducting individual assessments of teens in care and developing transitional independent living plans for them.

Training of Staff and Providers

- Two-thirds of the states will train foster parents, other providers, and staff to meet the independent living needs of teens they serve.
- One-third of the states plan to train volunteers to act as mentors for youths while in the system or after discharge.

Direct Youth Services

- About every state will provide training to teens in daily living skills either directly using a formal curriculum or through foster parents and other providers on a less formal basis.
- Half the states mention initiatives related to education, vocational training and employment. Most focus on completion of high school or GED Programs.
- Eleven propose to conduct retreats, special teen conferences, or seminars to give foster care youths an opportunity to share issues of common concern.

States' overall progress in establishing specific activities like those above has been delayed, in part due to initial foot-dragging by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in implementing the IV-E Independent Living Initiative.

HHS initially ignored its obligation under the 1985 amendment to both award the entitlement funding for the Independent Living Initiative and to issue regulations within 60 days of the law's April 7, 1986 enactment date, and instead repeatedly tried to divert the funds for other purposes. States were not even formally informed of the initiative until February 1987, five months after the start of the 1987 fiscal year, and even then HHS continued to assert its efforts to prevent implementation of the initiative. It was not until Congress rejected HHS' requests to divert funds and questioned the legality of its withholding of funds that HHS proceeded with the approval of state plans and the release of funds. Despite such recalcitrance, however, all 50 states and the District of Columbia submitted applications for Independent Living grants and received funds and approximately 20,000 youths 16 and over are expected to benefit from various Independent Living activities.

Recommended Changes in the IV-E Independent Living Initiative

The IV-E Independent Living Initiative offers significant hope to many young people who must leave foster care at age 18, or in some instances older ages, and need help obtaining the basic skills, educational and employment backgrounds, and self-confidence they need to move toward self-sufficiency. In order to ensure that these hopes will be realized, CDF recommends that the authority for the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative be extended and that additional children be made eligible for assistance under the initiative. Our recommendations track in part those embodied in Title I of H.R. 2753, The Child Welfare and Foster Care Amendments of 1987.

Reauthorize the IV-E Independent Living Initiative At Least Through FY 1990

The IV-E Independent Living Initiative should be reauthorized at least through FY 1990. Such an extension will allow states time to fully implement the initiative and allow Congress to fully consider the results of evaluations of individual state initiatives. A number of states currently are behind almost one year in implementing the initiative because they did not receive the federal funds until eight months into Fiscal Year 1987 and then many had to obtain legislative approval before they could obligate the funds.

As part of this two year extension, Congress should allow states to expend FY 1987 funds through FY 1989, provided the funds are obligated by the close of FY 1988. Without such an extension, it will be extremely difficult, and often impossible, for those states that only recently obtained authority to obligate the funds to fully expend their FY 1987 funds by the end of FY 1988 as the law currently requires. Teens in care will fail to benefit from the initiative.

The reauthorization of the IV-E Independent Living Initiative at least two years will also allow Congress to benefit from individual state reports of progress under the initiative, which are not yet available from all states, and from the national evaluation of the federal Independent Living initiative which HHS has contracted with Westat, Inc. of Rockville, Maryland to complete. The Westat study " A National Evaluation of Title IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth" will be completed in two phases. The evaluation will assess the impact of the federal initiative on independent living and teens in care and include recommendations for improved services and programs to help teens preparing to leave care and live independently. The evaluators will observe states' written policies, examine individual programs, and conduct interviews with groups of teens. A final report will be submitted to HHS in April 1989.

Expand Eligibility to All Children 16 and Over in State Care

Eligibility for the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative should also be extended to all children 16 and over who are in the care of the state child welfare agency. The IV-E Independent Living Initiative when originally enacted limited eligibility to those youths in foster care ages 16 and over who were eligible for federal foster care reimbursement under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. Nationwide IV-E children represent less than half, and closer to one-third, of all children in state supervised foster and they seem to represent similar proportions of the teen population in a number of states. In Connecticut, Kansas and Massachusetts, for example, IV-E eligible teens represent only about one-third of the teens in care. In West Virginia they are about 42 percent, in Rhode Island 13 percent, and in Virginia 10 percent.

Although it made some sense originally to limit eligibility to the IV-E teen population, in fact such a restriction on eligibility implies that there is a distinction between the independent living needs of IV-E and non-IV-E youths that does not exist. Currently program administrators are required to select youths for IV-E Independent Living services from their teen population who are eligible soley because of the fact that they entered care from an AFDC family, although this fact has little to do with their current needs or the problems they will encounter as they begin their transition to adulthood. the fact is that investments in all teens, irregardless of IV-E status, will decrease the likelihood that they will continue to need assistance from public programs when they leave care. Administrative efficiency and cost-efficiency support the suggestion that eligibility for IV-E Independent Living activities should be extended to all youths who are 16 and over and are in the care of the state agency, regardless of whether they are eligible for reimbursement under the IV-E Foster Care Program.

Eligibility should also continue for as long as a youth continues in state care. Because of its link to AFDC eligibility, the IV-E link currently requires that assistance to some youths in care be terminated arbitrarily at age 18 even though the teenager may continue in care and still be in need of such services. Although many states generally terminate custody at age 18, a number allow youths enrolled in school or equivalent vocational programs to remain in care. In those cases the youths should continue their eligibility for federal independent living services at least until they leave care. These oldest youths often are the ones who are most likely to be discharged to their own responsibility and perhaps the most in need of additional supports.

Teens in a range of supervised settings should also be eligible for the benefits of the federal independent living initiative. These might include youths in more traditional foster homes, group homes, and residential treatment centers, but also youths in a variety of semi-independent living arrangements such as supervised apartments and independent living subsidy programs. Although CDF does not at this time support the use of the limited IV-E independent living funds for reimbursement for maintenance costs or direct subsidies for these various placements, it strongly believes that youths in all semi-independent living arrangements should be eligible for services and supports to ease their transition from care.

CDF also recommends that the Subcommittee give states the option of extending eligibility for IV-E foster care maintenance payments to youths who continue in care beyond ages 17 or 18 and are residing in settings which are designed to assist them in making the transition from foster care to independent living. This recommendation is included in Section 101 of H.R. 2753.

Expand Independent Living Services to Include AfterCare Services for Otherwise Eligible Teens

As the Subcommittee considers reauthorization of the Independent Living Initiative, CDF urges you to specify that youths in state care who are otherwise eligible for independent living services under the IV-E Initiative will continue to be able to receive services or other supports for at least six months after they formally leave state care. Aftercare services might include activities such as the provision of mentors or community volunteers, peer support groups, individual or group counselling, and resource and referral assistance as youths inquire about the availability of specific services. A period of follow-up or aftercare would obviously be useful to the teens involved. It would also provide an opportunity for the agency to track the progress of youths when they leave care. The state could assess whether youths have been able to obtain adequate housing, food, health care, education, and employment. They could also determine whether they have maintained a healthy level of emotional security through community supports and relationships with family, friends and co-workers. The option to use IV-E Independent Living funds for aftercare services for youths who had been eligible for such services while in state care will enhance the likelihood of a successful transition for a number of youths. Approximately 20 percent of the states have begun to use volunteer mentors and/or peer support groups for youths preparing to leave care and during the transition. About the same number have also expressed an interest in tracking the well-being of youths after they leave care.

In conclusion, CDF urges the Subcommittee to continue funding for the IV-E Independent Living Initiative at least through FY 1990 and to expand the population of youths eligible to benefit from the services and activities funded under the initiative. The federal initiative has provided a major boost to state efforts on behalf of teens in care, and promises to demonstrate the value, both in human and fiscal terms, of more intensive investments on behalf of this vulnerable population of young people. The Subcommittee has a rare opportunity to strengthen the life options available to these youths. We commend you for your leadership in this area of child welfare reform and look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of these and other children and adolescents in the child welfare system.

TESTIMONY OF MARK HARDIN
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I am Mark Hardin. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony concerning the extension of the federal Independent Living Initiative for adolescents in foster care. I have been working on legal issues relating to foster care since 1975, and I have researched and published a number of books and articles, provided technical assistance, and have lectured on the subject. I am currently Director of the American Bar Association's Foster Care Project.

I would like to state initially that my testimony represents only my views as a private citizen and does not represent either the views or official policy of the American Bar Association. In fact, the ABA has not taken any official policy on the issues being discussed today.

I present this statement in support of extending the federal Independent Living Initiative and of deleting certain restrictions concerning the use funds allocated pursuant to the initiative. The federal Independent Living Initiative was adopted in 1986 as an amendment to the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Public Law 96-272.

My interest in the Independent Living Initiative is based on my work on implementation of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. Since August, 1980, I have, through my work with the ABA, collaborated with bar groups, judges, state legislatures, and advocacy groups throughout the United States in efforts to put the Act in full effect. The Foster Care Project has also participated in studies on the implementation of the Act, has conducted educational programs on the Act in all parts of the United States, and has written on the Act in numerous monographs, articles, and books. My interest in the Initiative is an extension of my work concerning federal foster care legislation in general.

I have participated in many educational programs specifically addressing the Initiative, have written a journal article and a special monograph on the subject, and have provided technical assistance on legal issues related to the Initiative. Most recently, my office has examined state laws and policies concerning the transition of young people in foster care to the legal status of an adult. I have also have served on a committee of the Child Welfare League of America which is developing standards for Independent Living Services and Programs.

In the course of directing the ABA Foster Care Project for the last 7 years, I have observed significant improvements in state foster care systems. Planning for abused and neglected children in foster care has improved, and the numbers of children inappropriately placed in foster care or left in care for prolonged periods have been substantially reduced, especially taking into account the increased number of reported cases of child abuse and neglect. I am convinced that the Act has had a major influence in bringing about these improvements. The Act has been useful not only in requiring specific program improvements by state child welfare agencies, but has also been helpful to state advocacy groups, bar organizations, judges, and others seeking improvements and changes in their child welfare systems.

However, the characteristics of children in foster care have changed since the passage of the Act, in part because it has been successful. Younger and easy to care for children have been able to stay at home or have tended to remain in care for a relatively short time, either returning home or being placed for adoption. Increasing proportions of children remaining in foster care have been those with more serious problems, those who are more difficult to place, and those who are older. In particular, the proportion of adolescents in foster care has dramatically increased. This is also due in part to the fact that many status offenders and other young people formerly dealt with by the juvenile justice system have entered foster care and are now the responsibility of the child welfare system.

Because of the increasing numbers of adolescents in foster care, the child welfare system has had to cope with young people "aging out" of the foster care system, unprepared to function as independent, responsible adults. Prior to the passage of the Independent Living Initiative in 1986, very few agencies had established comprehensive programs and policies to prepare adolescents in foster care for independent living.

The Independent Living Initiative has provided a powerful and much needed stimulus to states to develop policies, programs, and services to prepare young people for independent living. Since the passage of the Initiative, this formerly obscure issue has moved to the forefront among issues addressed by child welfare administrators, academicians, and practitioners. In my work reviewing state laws and agency regulations related to the preparation of adolescents in foster care for independent living, I have noted a marked increase in focus on the preparation of young people in foster care for independent living. This is due, in part, to the fact that the Initiative has led states to hire or reassign staff to focus intensively on independent living issues.

The effectiveness of the Initiative is far from complete, however. Because only a short time has elapsed since its passage, and because of delays in federal implementation, there has not been enough time for agencies to comprehensively develop and implement independent living services, programs, policies, and laws. Progress has been uneven around the United States and even within states that have made the most impressive progress.

Accordingly, I recommend that the special funding for the Independent Living Initiative be extended for a period of four years. Based on my observation concerning implementation of other provisions of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, it will take this long for independent living services and policies to be systematically put into practice.

I also recommend that states be allowed to use funds allocated under the Initiative for adolescents in foster care who are not eligible for federal foster care matching funds under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. This

includes foster children under age 18. It is abundantly clear that the restriction of the funds to Title IV-E eligible adolescents has complicated the state administration of the Initiative, as discussed in the monograph that the ABA Foster Care Project has published on this topic. By comparison, federal funding for services to prevent foster care and to help reunify families, which is provided under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, is not restricted to Title IV-E eligible children and their families. There is no reason why funds under the Independent Living Initiative should be so restricted.

Further, states should be free to use funds under the initiative for postfoster care services. In reviewing state law and policy, I have noted that most states still require an abrupt cessation of special state assistance when a young person is discharged from foster care. A young person can experience this abrupt discharge as being "dumped" from a foster family home or child caring institution. States should be permitted to use funds under the Initiative to provide special aid and limited "aftercare" services to help young people make a smooth transition from foster care to adulthood.

Finally, I recommend that the independent living case plan requirement be maintained. 42 U.S.C. §675(1), as amended in 1986, requires that the case plan of a foster child age 16 or over must, when appropriate, "include a written description of the programs and services which will help such child prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living." This requires the child welfare agency to explicitly focus on preparing each adolescent in foster care for independent living, whenever appropriate. It also requires the agency to focus on independent living during semiannual case reviews, since such reviews are concerned, among other things, with "the extent of compliance with the case plan...." 42 U.S.C. §675(5)(B). The case plan requirement is necessary to help ensure that independent living concerns are addressed systematically and consistently by state agencies.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my views, and I hope that this Subcommittee will recommend to the full Committee that the Independent Living Initiative be extended for four years; that funds under the Initiative be made available for non-Title IV-E eligible foster children as well as for special aid and aftercare services for young people formerly in foster care; and that the 1986 amendment to the definition of "case plan" be retained.

national fund for runaway children

the national network

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STATEMENT ON:

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES FOR FOSTER CARE IV-E YOUTH

The National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, Inc. a membership organization of over 700 youth serving agencies, recognizes the need and strongly supports efforts underway to reauthorize transitional living services to youth in foster care.

Congress established Transitional Living Services in 1986 for a two year period, with funding being appropriated for FY 1987 and FY 1988. The initial delay in freeing up the funds caused a lag time in the actual implementation of local programs.

State programs are now operational and we have gained valuable information and expertise, even though the data and statistics are based on a shortened time frame. We have confirmed the need for transitonal living services for youth in foster care who are aging out of their support system.

The National Network has concerns about the legislation's current narrow program focus. As crafted the Transitional Living Program was designed to assist youth aging out of foster care. The IV-E eligibility, however, excludes a large share of the youth the program was constructed to assist. Young people in state care, needing these services are currently being denied because they have the wrong label.

Our membership strongly urges the program be expanded to cover all appropriate youth in state care, who should benefit from these services. Runaway programs comprise the bulk of our membership and work daily with many young people who are involved with the child welfare system. It is not unusual for youth to flee state placement if the services and support systems provided are not geared toward their development as an adult.

Supervised apartment living needs to be included as a service delivery alternative in transitional living programs. This alternative allows young people to experience living on their own, with their own home, while working or attending school, and still remain attached to a support system.This is often the transitional phase these young people require to adjust to a productive adulthood. This alternative should be included in the package which reauthorizes the Transitional Living Programs.

Transitional living programs provide the services and direction adolescents need when they are developing their independence without the support of the traditional family system. A child in state care still has a parent, the state and federal government. No parent, including the government, should abandon their child at the age of 18 or any time before that.

The National Network considers this legislation of primary importance to youth and strongly urges Congress to reauthorize the Transitional Living Programs for youth being aged out of foster care. We further recommend that the legislation be expanded to cover a larger share of the youth in state care and that supervised apartment living be consider a programmatic alternative.

Attached to this statement is the National Network of Runaway and and Youth Services' resolution on Emanicaption/Transtional Living. This resolution was formulated at our annual meeting in February 1988 by our membership.

EMANCIPATION/TRANSITIONAL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS
(Action)

WHEREAS the FY 1985 report to Congress on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act states that 33 percent of the youth sheltered by the programs were homeless and close to 10 percent ran from a state placement, and

WHEREAS a new federal initiative which provides a Transitional Living Program to foster care IV-E adolescents being aged out or emancipated was enacted at $45 million for FY 1987 and FY 1988, and

WHEREAS the members of the National Network have long been aware of the special needs of these youth, and

WHEREAS the members of the National Network have developed unique programs to aid in their transition into a productive and fulfilling adult life, and

WHEREAS the needs of these youth often include a process whereby they may be emancipated or aged out of foster care.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the National Network oppose the "best interest of the child" criteria and support utilization of the following criteria with young people seeking emancipation.

1. Efforts to promote reconciliation of the youth and his/her family have not been successful;

2. There is a habitual withdrawal of parental/guardian support;

3. The needs of the youth for certain services and/or commodities can best be secured once the youth is emancipated;

4. The impact of emancipation on the emotional needs of the youth and when appropriate his/her family has been or is being addressed;

5. The impact of emancipation on the youth and parent/guardian with regard to the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of the youth and guardian/parent has been explored with the youth and when appropriate the parent/guardian;

6. The impact of emancipation on the youth and parent/guardian with regard to other legal criteria and regulations has been explored with the youth and when appropriate the parent/guardian;

7. Emancipation of the youth can be coupled with appropriate independent living skills programs;

8. Youth going through an emancipation process are encouraged to participate voluntarily in such programs;

9. These foregoing steps should be included in the legal hearing process by which the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of the youth and guardian/parent are determined and emancipation decreed.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NNRYS members should support and participate in both state and federal initiatives for the development of plans to fulfill the provisions of the aforementioned federal legislation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Network will advocate for the legislation or the modification of regulations to permit states to utilize existing federal foster care funding and independent living programming in lieu of alternative family or group placements.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Network will advocate for legislation to expand independent living money to provide services to IV-B and other homeless youth, as well as IV-E youth, who also need independent living services.

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